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CHINA: HUMAN RIGHTS & U.S. POLICY

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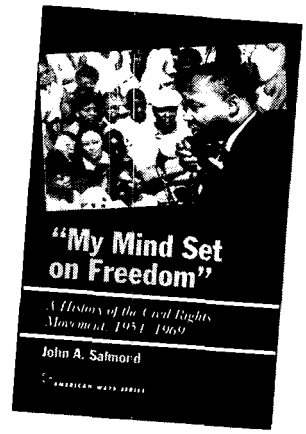

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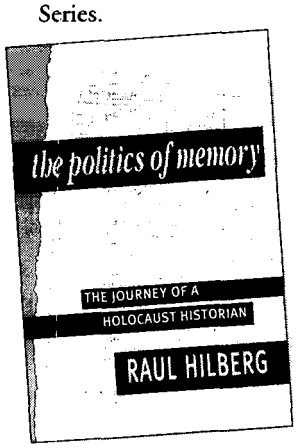

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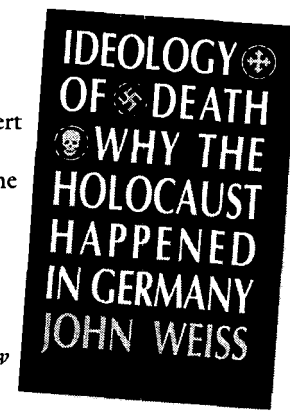

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Michael Walzer
5

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHINA: A SYMPOSIUM

Alice H. Amsden, 7 • *Stanley Hoffmann*, 8 • *Mark Levinson*, 10 • *Margaret O'Brien Steinfels*, 12

POLITICS ABROAD

Adam Michnik on Central European democracy, 14, with a response by *Ira Katznelson*, 19 • *Erazim Kohák* on freedom after the cold war, 21 • *Tadeusz Kowalik* on Poland, 26 • *Bogdan Denitch* on Yugoslav tremors, 31 • *Forrest D. Colburn* on democracy in Latin America, 34 • *Douglas W. Payne* on Nicaragua, 39

ARTICLES

Why I'm Still "Left"
Mitchell Cohen
43

Finding the Real Center:
Lessons of the 1996 Elections
Ruy Teixeira
51

The Strike Weapon: Can It Still Work?
Joshua B. Freeman
60

Work Rights, Individual Rights
Nelson Lichtenstein
66

Their Energy Policy—and Ours
Daniel Lazare and *Charles Komanoff*
73

The Anti-Political Populism of Cultural Studies
Todd Gitlin
77

The New York Intellectuals: Some Personal History
Morris Dickstein
83

Picasso Surviving
Marshall Berman
87

ARGUMENTS

Todd Gitlin and *Iris Young* on complexity and coalitions, 92

RECONSIDERATIONS

Joanne Barkan on *Monopoly Capital*, 95

MAGAZINES

Peter Mandler on magazines of the British left, 103

BOOKS

Michael Bérubé on David Denby's *Great Books*, 107 • *Amy Swerdlow* on Glen Jeansonne's *Women of the Far Right*, 112 • *George Scialabba* on *A Partisan Century*, edited by Edith Kurzweil, 116 • *Steven Lukes* on Joseph Schwartz's *The Permanence of the Political*, 119 • *Steven Hahn* on George M. Fredrickson's *Black Liberation*, 122

LETTERS

127

THE LAST PAGE

Maxine Phillips
128

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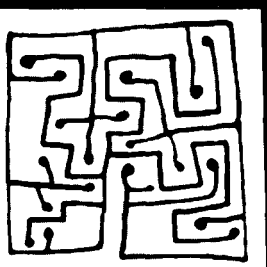

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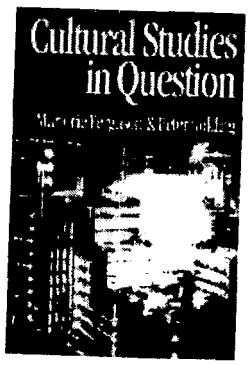
Cultural Studies in Question

Edited by **Marjorie Ferguson** *University of Maryland, College Park* and **Peter Golding** *Loughborough University*



This major text offers a critical reappraisal of the contemporary practice of cultural studies. It focuses in particular on the contribution of cultural studies to the understanding of media, communications and popular cultures in contemporary societies. The contributors, an outstanding group of internationally acclaimed scholars, examine topics such as: the different strands of cultural studies and how they are developed; whether cultural studies is a coherent discipline; tensions and debates within cultural studies; alternative or related approaches to contemporary media and society; and the movement by cultural studies revisionists towards more empirical and sociological modes of analysis.

Contents

Marjorie Ferguson and Peter Golding Introduction \ PART ONE: CONTEXT AND CRITIQUE \ **James W Carey** Reflections on the Project of (American) Cultural Studies \ **Todd Gitlin** The Anti-Political Populism of Cultural Studies \ **Denis McQuail** Policy Help Wanted: Willing and Able Media Culturalists Please Apply \ **Nicholas Garnham** Political Economy and the Practice of Cultural Studies \ **Sari Thomas** Dominance and Ideology in Culture and Cultural Studies \ **Graham Murdock** Base Notes: The Conditions of Cultural Practice \ **Douglas Kellner** Overcoming the Divide: Cultural Studies and Political Economy \ PART TWO: REVISIONS AND ALTERNATIVES \ **David Morley** Theoretical Orthodoxies: Textualism, Constructivism and the 'New Ethnography' in Cultural Studies \ **Jim McGuigan** Cultural Populism Revisited \ **Joli Jensen and John J Pauly** Imagining the Audience: Losses and Gains in Cultural Studies \ **Angela McRobbie** The E's and the Anti-E's: New Questions for Feminism and Cultural Studies \ **John Downing** Cultural Studies, Communication and Change: Eastern Europe to the Urals \ **Michael Billig** From Codes to Utterances: Cultural Studies, Discourse and Psychology

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Editor's Page

Socialist internationalism was originally based on beliefs that few of us hold anymore: that the workers of the world have no country; that the struggle against oppression is the same everywhere; that, even if there are different national "roads" to socialism, exactly the same socialism lies at the end of all the roads; and, finally, that this will be a global regime, transcending all ethnic and cultural differences. Not so many years ago, a section on "Politics Abroad" in a socialist magazine would simply have measured progress along the various roads—a reiterated tale of victories and defeats, essentially similar wherever they occurred (that's why it was so easy to have a "position" on all of them), with a predetermined end.

But when socialism is qualified by words like "democratic," internationalism is also qualified. Now we are required to recognize that different peoples with different histories and ways of life will make different political choices. The national roads don't all lead to the same place. In what sense, then, do we still have comrades in Poland or the Czech Republic, Nicaragua or Costa Rica, Burma or China? What is it that interests us about, say, all the struggles for democracy—sure to lead, if they are successful, to different social and economic policies, many of which we won't like? What is the reason for our persistent entanglement with (mostly) powerless people in faraway places?

We are participants in a new internationalism, heir to the old but looser, more pluralist—most clearly visible in the human rights, environmentalist, and feminist movements (labor belongs in the series too). The focus of movements of this sort is mostly negative: against ecological degradation, ethnic cleansing, political repression, genital mutilation, child labor, and so on. Their participants have few commitments of the sort that the old internationalism required: to working-class power, or the extension of the welfare system, or the democratization of industry. Human rights activists undoubtedly favor democracy, but their minimalist programs are entirely consistent with fairly constrained versions of democratic government. Environmentalists and feminists don't necessarily care about what sort of government it is that stops the practices they oppose. Yet all these people find comrades abroad, struggles they can join, in whose outcomes they are morally and politically involved. And so do we.

Our own program is similarly minimalist: though we remain committed to welfarism and industrial democracy, we have supported dissidents in many parts of the world without inquiring about their positions on these questions—and without any sure knowledge about what kind of politics their victory would bring. Internationalism today is a form of solidarity without certainty, without rigid ideological prerequisites.

Still, we are sure enough about our solidarity to organize a symposium in this issue on whether or not the power of the United States—never a comfortable instrument for the left—should be used against political repression and economic exploitation (prison labor, child labor) in China. And this same sense of solidarity led us to ask three former East European dissidents, who have kept their balance and maintained a critical position (or three different critical positions) in the years since 1989, to reflect on the difficulties of post-communist democracy. And we have added to these reflections a "scorecard" on the efforts of democratic reformers in Latin America, a critical examination of contemporary Nicaragua, and a report on the first signs of democratic resistance in Serbia.

We have comrades in all these countries, though "comrade" is a less descriptive word than it used to be: we and our friends abroad often march to different drumbeats, possibly in different directions. What binds us to them is the fact that they have taken a stand, often at great personal risk, against things that we too oppose. So we need to know how they are faring, and whether and how we can help.

M.W. □

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CHINA, THE UNITED STATES, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Clinton administration has apparently abandoned any effort, even the pretense of an effort, to press China on human rights issues. Questions about political repression and coerced labor are still "raised" at diplomatic meetings, but without any suggestion that persistence in these practices will have economic consequences—loss of most-favored-nation status, delay or rejection of trade agreements, selective embargoes of Chinese products, and so on. Instead, we are told that the best way to bring about changes in China is through maximizing its exposure to the West—which means, in practice, maximizing its participation in the global free market.

Is this a persuasive response? Or should the United States use its economic power to punish violations of human rights in countries like China? Should American liberals and leftists be pressing the Clinton administration for an activist, interventionist foreign policy in defense of rights?

—EDS.

Alice H. Amsden

We need a progressive agenda for human rights that is more than a knee-jerk response to the multinationals that are shaping post-cold war foreign policy. To protect its own profitability, business opposes economic sanctions against human rights violators. But this doesn't necessarily mean we should favor sanctions.

China's human rights abuses are in the limelight not because they are exceptionally egregious but because China's trade surplus with the United States is huge and its future as an economic power is frightening. Sanctions are promoted as being in the best political *and economic* interests of both American and third world workers—more human rights in poor countries supposedly mean more political clout for labor and hence better working conditions. Thus, political idealism and economic pragmatism operate in unison and many American progressives clamor for trade sanctions to kill two birds—China's gulag and stagnating U.S. wages allegedly caused by free trade and cheap foreign labor.

Unfortunately, none of this makes much practical sense. It is wishful thinking to imagine that workers the world over share the same economic interests and that tying human rights to market access benefits one and all.

Suppose Washington imposes high tariff barriers on China's exports to force political reform. Most likely our demand for China's exports will be diverted to suppliers in other low-wage countries. The point is that almost all these other countries have human rights records as reprehensible as that of China—Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and so forth. For sanctions to be even moderately effective against a big trader like China they would have to be imposed against other big traders that are also human rights abusers. Such generalized trade barriers might delight American wage earners and

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radicals in the short run. But they are almost certain to invite retaliation against U.S. exports, whose eventual decline would harm American workers in the long run. Moreover, economic sanctions would penalize some of the world's most exploited workers (even ignoring a tiny minority of prison labor) by cutting back their exports. Economic sanctions are thus unilateral protectionism by another name.

And what kind of human rights are we talking about anyway? Should we stop buying from China and start buying from India, a democracy with about the same per-capita income as China but with double its rates of infant mortality and illiteracy? Or patronize Thailand, which has parliamentary elections (sort of) but ubiquitous child prostitution?

An essential element of a progressive strategy is that the fight for human rights can't be imposed from without. It has to engage large numbers of people from within. To broaden the movement, human rights themselves have to be defined broadly.

In 1948 the United Nations unanimously endorsed four types of human rights: political (the right to free elections); legal (the right to due process); social (the right to form organizations); and economic (the right to a job and life-preserving health care). The United States has ignored the last right, domestically and internationally, and hasn't exactly championed the right to organize either. Yet honoring both economic and social rights is critical in building a popular human rights effort. For example, apartheid in South Africa was harmful to Africans both politically and economically and thus African people supported international economic sanctions against apartheid even at their own personal expense. The same willingness to sacrifice—in the face of negative growth—is now evident in Burma (Myanmar). By contrast, economic policies in China and other emerging economies have created economic miracles, with massive job creation and real wage increases. Therefore, there is intense grassroots hostility in these countries toward international incentives that jeopardize such growth in the name of either promoting or defending dissent.

The focus of a progressive human rights agenda should be the arms trade. After all, arms are designed to kill people and are the most offensive breach of human rights. Authoritarian regimes pay huge sums of money to import weapons that result in lower national living standards. Over half of American arms sales are to the third world, and the largest arms merchant of all is the United States (followed by Britain and France). Human rights activists should push for monitoring such flows, making them more transparent, and then raise the prospect of an arms embargo to and from the worst human rights offenders.

Stanley Hoffmann

The editors' statement raises three questions. First, should the United States practice an active policy for the defense of human rights abroad? The answer, in my view, is yes. It would be best if such a policy were multilateral, and enlisted other liberal democracies, so that the frequently heard accusation of neo-imperialism aimed at the United States would lose any semblance of plausibility. But in the absence of support by our allies and friends, the United States should be ready to act by itself: those who can, should—indeed, they must. To be sure, we cannot deal with every conceivable violation of human rights. But there is a minimum that needs to be assured and protected, and it consists of a mixture of political and economic rights: the right to life—to be safeguarded from political oppression and from deliberate starvation, the right to one's physical integrity, the right to express one's ideas and grievances and to assemble in their defense—

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even in the absence of full-scale democracy, the elimination of all modern forms of slavery, including forced labor and especially child labor. There is an inextricable mix of moral and practical reasons for such a policy. Morally, the defense of the fundamental rights of human beings does not stop at one's nation's border. Those who have rights also have obligations—contemporary American liberals emphasize rights more than duties, which is a moral error. Each nation, each culture, may have its own traditions, but there is a common humanity that has to be preserved. Politically, murderous states are powderkegs likely to explode into civil or interstate wars. An international order of murderers would not be orderly for long.

Second, should the United States use its economic power to sanction China's violations of human rights? It is a sad fact that we have been more eager to act for human rights when the violators were small countries not allied to or protected by the United States: Haiti (recently!), not Guatemala (until recently), Burma (weakly), not Indonesia. It is also a fact that we have an interest not to turn a potential great power into an enemy. But strategic and economic interests in "engagement" become far too easily excuses for passivity on human rights. We should make it crystal clear to the present rulers of China that good relations with us, which they claim to desire, depend on their willingness to treat dissidents fairly, to move away from repression and coercion, to respect democratic institutions in Hong Kong. China needs access to American markets far more than we need to penetrate and invest in China's: our increasing deficit in trade with China provides us with a weapon. There is a whole range of measures available to us. Loss of the most-favored nation status may not be the most effective. But we can refuse to buy goods produced by that (vast) part of the Chinese economy that is still under state and military control, and goods fabricated with the "help" of coerced and child labor. We may complicate relations with the present Chinese leaders. But the Chinese leadership of the future may well be grateful.

Third, what about the argument that Chinese participation in the global free market will be the most effective agent of change? I see it as a very thin justification for greed. Capitalism and human rights are not synonymous. Capitalists like order and stability, and don't care whether it is provided by liberal institutions or by authoritarian ones. Both types have proved to be quite evenly corruptible. A certain degree of penetration by modern technology and of participation

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THE EDITORS □

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in transnational economic undertakings may help erode rigidly bureaucratic institutions. But this is perfectly compatible with an energetic human rights policy. Economic opening to the West plus the Helsinki Accords provided the mix of carrots and sticks that led to the rise of Gorbachev. As long as the Chinese regime remains what it is, it will do its best to limit the effects of the economic "opening" of China, so as not to be endangered by it. An active human rights policy by the United States would gradually force China's rulers to choose between the (controlled) insertion into the world economy they seek and need, and change in their political practices. As long as we remain passive, they have no incentive to alter them.

Mark Levinson

In his 1997 inauguration speech President Bill Clinton said: "Our hopes, our hearts, our hands are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom. Their cause is America's cause."

That, unfortunately, is not true. The despots who rule the world's most populous nation have found, in the Clinton administration and the American business community, powerful allies in their effort to suppress human rights.

What accounts for the Clinton administration's appeasement of China? Is it based on a belief that our relations with China should not, as Madeleine Albright recently said, be held "hostage to one issue, whether it be human rights or trade"? Is it because the administration fears the economic consequences of angering China's oligarchy, which considers human rights an internal affair? Is it the influence of "experts," who all seem to stress the importance of "constructive engagement" with China (by which they seem to mean that we should maximize our involvement with China and express our concerns about human rights there, but never back them up with sanctions)?

Despite what Albright has said, our relations with China *are* defined (held hostage?) by what the administration considers our economic interest in China. This isn't necessarily a bad thing: U.S. policy *should* be concerned with pursuing our economic interest. The question is: how is that interest defined?

The Clinton administration and its business supporters stress the number of American jobs created by trade with China. However, U.S. exports to China amount to a mere 2 percent of overall American exports. The real business interest in China is not protection of U.S. jobs but access to China's vast supply of cheap labor. U.S. investment in China climbed from $358 million in 1990 to $25 billion in 1996. Most of the goods made with cheap Chinese labor are exported back to the United States. These exports—air conditioners, auto parts, toys, textiles and apparel, electrical machinery, shoes—are highly profitable for the companies but they undercut the bargaining power of labor in the U.S. and frequently take away jobs.

The United States's interest in China surely goes beyond creating a safe haven for investment. If our goal is a democratic and prosperous China, then our trade policy should make it possible for workers to receive a rising share of the benefits of increased productivity and economic expansion. Part of a strategy to accomplish that is to link trade to worker rights.

There are both moral and economic reasons for linking trade and labor rights. The moral reason is to limit the exploitation of workers. We should be uncomfortable when multinational corporations profit from using impoverished workers who, because they lack basic rights, are unable to fight for better working conditions. The economic reason to link trade and labor rights is

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to make it possible for workers in countries like China to raise their living standards. The time has come to recognize internationally what the Great Depression forced America to realize nationally: advancing workers' living standards is critical to boosting their purchasing power and to achieving sustainable growth. This resulting increase in consumption in developing countries helps to create a domestic market. This benefits developing countries as well as spurring exports from developed countries.

The conventional view is that trade automatically benefits all. The opposite is increasingly true. The conditions under which many products are made in the developing world are abominable. And it is not uncommon for American corporations to extract concessions from American workers by threatening to move factories overseas and employ workers whose rights are systematically violated. The idea that worker rights within China is an internal affair cannot be taken seriously. China's massive involvement in the global economy makes it very much an external affair.

Linking trade to worker rights does not prevent a country from using low wages to initiate development. However, it does prevent countries from gaining competitive advantage by suppressing wages and violating basic labor rights. Workers must be able to organize and bargain to improve their conditions on terms compatible with their countries' stage of economic development.

Precisely because the United States is China's largest overseas market—we import more than one-third of China's exports—we have leverage over China. Even a partial loss of access to the American market would be a serious blow to Chinese economic expansion. In renouncing economic pressure as a means of influencing China, the Clinton administration is renouncing the use of any sort of external leverage at all.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, we accept that the proper stance toward China is "constructive engagement." What determines whether the policy is working? Has some measure of democratic rights really been won? Do independent trade unions exist? Do workers have the right to strike? Are dissidents, even those within

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the ruling party, allowed to speak?

By these criteria Clinton's policy is a dismal failure. Does anyone believe that China's human rights record has improved in the last several years? According to Human Rights Watch Asia:

> China's small but formerly vibrant dissident community has been all but crushed; repression of nationalist and ethnic minority movements is the most severe in years; an intense crackdown is underway against all forms of unauthorized religious belief and worship; and the numbers of judicial executions in China are now greater than at any time since 1983.

What makes the Clinton administration's policy even more inexplicable is that China is doing exactly what the Clinton administration refuses to do. It is using economic pressure against those who criticize its human rights practices. When the German Bundestag adopted a resolution critical of China's policies in Tibet, Beijing canceled a visit by foreign minister Klaus Kinkel and threatened to take its business elsewhere. When China was purchasing airplanes it used competition between a European company, Airbus, and America's Boeing as a means of silencing both European and American critics.

It may be comforting to believe that political freedom will inevitably follow from economic growth, that American companies are doing their part for liberalization just by being there. But listen to Deng Xiaoping, who ten years ago boasted, "We put Wei Jingsheng* behind bars, didn't we? Did that damage China's reputation? We haven't released him, but China's image has not been tarnished."

When Deng's successors speak similar words as they stamp out dissent, can anyone say they are wrong? □

*Wei Jingsheng served a fifteen-year jail sentence for calling for more democracy in 1978. In 1994 he was jailed again after meeting with an American human rights official.

Margaret O'Brien Steinfels

Expecting Bill Clinton to do something about human rights in China is like expecting him to do something about campaign finance reform—what we will actually get is a flood of morally earnest talk followed by more morally earnest talk. At a January 28, 1997 press conference the president said, "[I] believe that the impulses of the society and the nature of the economic change will work together," and clinched his argument with the inevitable metaphor: change in China is "inevitable, just as inevitably the Berlin Wall fell."

The argument against withdrawing most-favored-nation trading status from China or imposing economic sanctions has some truth: the decline of a command economy and the free movement of people and goods associated with a capitalist economy may bring in their wake political reforms, democracy, and civil liberties. It hasn't happened yet, but it might.

The decline and fall of the Soviet bloc provides mixed evidence. Political reform and democracy have come in those parts of Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) where democratic governments have had previous tenure and which have had strong economic and cultural links to Western Europe. Free markets and the free exchange of ideas are not novel practices there. But in Russia and those satellite nations long tied to it, free markets seem to have brought the most destructive features of capitalism while preserving the most corrupting influences of communist political and civic life.

China looks more like Russia than Poland or the Czech Republic. It looks potentially more like its neighbor Singapore, which couples a booming capitalist economy with an oppressive political regime. (Perhaps this is the model that will be imposed on Hong Kong when it reverts to Chinese control.)

Economic sanctions, especially unilateral ones, also have a mixed record, as a recent essay in *Commonweal* shows ("War by Other Means: Criteria for the Use of Economic Sanctions,"

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February 28, 1997). U.S. sanctions have kept Cuba poor, but have not achieved their purpose: the downfall of the Castro regime. Multilateral sanctions against Serbia and Iraq have had mixed results politically, and the sanctions against Iraq, which have caused dire shortages of food and medicine, may themselves now constitute a form of human rights abuse, especially against children. The embargo against South Africa may be the one sterling example of success: along with other factors—economic, cultural, and athletic (!)—isolation contributed to real political and moral change, a turn to equality and the end of apartheid.

What kind of pressures might work on China? If governments, including our own, are unlikely to engage in punitive economic measures, are there other strategies? The example of South Africa calls to mind the pressure that U.S. stockholders brought to bear on companies doing business there, if only by embarrassing them. Who's doing business with China? Can they be persuaded to observe international labor standards in their factories? Can they provide alternative educational or social welfare services to their employees? In a similar fashion, pension funds and individual pension accounts ought to be scrutinized for investments in China; we can press for change by threatening to shift the funds elsewhere.

Recent efforts of a presidential task force to get U.S. apparel companies to agree upon worldwide minimum labor standards in the factories they own or buy from could have an impact on labor practices in China. American consumers could buy selectively: we should look at the labels before we buy those chinos, that new computer, or that exquisite vase. A concerted and well-publicized effort of American consumers refusing to buy items made by children might slowly begin to eradicate exploitation of the young.

Corporations and companies ought to be applauded for resisting China's monomaniacal efforts to control information. The Disney Corporation refused to be cowed by China's complaints about its forthcoming film on the Dalai Lama. But a Rupert Murdoch-owned television station in Hong Kong pulled the BBC News Service after complaints from the Chinese government. The free flow of information and ideas is central to any strategy meant to encourage political reform. How about closing down Radio Martí and spending the money on Radio Free China? All those instruments of communication—fax machines, copiers, and the Internet—that kept Central Europeans in touch with one another and the outside world could be instruments of freedom for the Chinese as well. How about sending a fax machine to your Chinese pen pal? Or imagine what all those Hong Kong fax machines can do when they, too, become a part of China in July.

The Berlin Wall may not be an entirely misleading metaphor—but the wall around China will have to come down in slow motion. It is obvious that the development of political and civil liberties in China will take time. The pace will be swifter if all of us make it our business to pay attention to what we buy and where our dollars go. Then even Bill Clinton might do more than talk. □

WELCOME ABOARD

Welcome to Randall Kennedy, who was elected to the *Dissent* editorial board at its winter meeting. Kennedy, the editor of *Reconstruction* magazine, is a professor at the Harvard Law School, where he teaches courses on contracts, freedom of expression, and the regulation of race relations. He was educated at Princeton University, Oxford University, and Yale Law School, and clerked for Judge J. Skelly Wright of the U.S. Court of Appeals and for Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has written several important articles for *Dissent*.

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Adam Michnik

GRAY IS BEAUTIFUL

Thoughts on Democracy in Central Europe

This article began as a talk at the New School for Social Research, at a forum on Ira Katznelson's recent book Liberalism's Crooked Circle, *which was written as a letter to Adam Michnik. The argument between Katznelson and Michnik is focused on the scope and ambition of democratic politics in Eastern Europe. Katznelson responded briefly at the New School forum and has written up the response for* Dissent.—*EDS.*

People from Central Europe like to tell jokes. For years, jokes offered them asylum. In the world of jokes, they not only felt free and sovereign, despite captivity and Soviet domination, they also laughed. So: two men, with the experience that comes with age, were playing tennis. The tennis ball ended up in the bushes. Looking for the ball, one of the players saw a frog. The frog spoke to him with a human voice: "I'm a beautiful princess, turned into a frog by a mischievous wizard. If you kiss me, I will become a princess once again. I will marry you, you will be a prince, and we will live happily ever after." The player put the frog into his pocket, found the ball, and continued the game. After a while, the frog again spoke to him, this time from his pocket: "Sir, did you forget about me? I am a beautiful princess, turned into a frog. If you kiss me, I will become a princess again. We will get married and live happily ever after!" And then she heard his answer: "Dear lady frog, I will be completely honest with you. I have reached the age at which I would rather have a talking frog than a new wife."

This frog is Central Europe, knocking at the gates of NATO and the European Union. NATO and the European Union have not yet made up their minds to kiss. They don't yet know whether they prefer to have a talking frog or a new wife.

Let us skip the controversies about defining the borders of Central Europe. Let's remind ourselves, however, of the statement by the Hungarian writer George Konrád: "It is we, who live in Central Europe, who began the two great World Wars." Put differently, this multinational mosaic, conquered by the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires, was, and still is, a source of conflict and destabilization. Today, seven years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the nations of Central Europe are facing new opportunities and new challenges. How will things turn out for them?

More than ten years ago, through the works of its artists, philosophers, and writers, Central Europe came to be thought of as a realm of spiritual freedom, diversity, and tolerance. Milan Kundera helped to create this myth against the fact of Soviet domination: in the place of the Anglo-Saxon formula "the countries of the Soviet Bloc," an image appeared of Central Europe as a home of equal nations with an abundant, colorful culture, nurtured by a diversity of languages, religions, traditions and personalities.

It was not an absurd idea, not a false image. Kundera, as well as Václav Havel, Konrád, and others, were fully justified in rereading the cultural heritage of this region of borderlands—where nations, religions, and cultures rub up against one another. They were fully justified in presenting it as the realization of a multicultural ideal of society—a miniature Europe of Nations—founded on the principle of maximum diversity in minimum space. These writers also had a wise idea concerning spiritual-political

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strategy: their nations, strikingly weak and powerless in confronting the imperial appetites of their neighbors, would transform powerlessness into power. Here we have a land of small nations, conquered, subjected, and enslaved for generations, transforming itself into the fertile soil that gave birth to Robert Musil and Franz Kafka, Thomáš Masaryk and Karel Capek, Adam Mickiewicz and Joseph Conrad, I.B. Singer and Albert Einstein, Miroslav Krleža and Dominik Tatarka, Czeslaw Milosz and Jaroslav Seifert, Elias Canetti and Emanuel Levinas, Eugene Ionesco and Georg Lukács.

The trump card of these small nations was their very non-imperial character, which made them natural allies of freedom and tolerance. Centuries of existence in an environment of oppression and repression produced a specific culture, characterized by honor and self-irony, the stubbornness to stand by values, and the courage to believe in romantic ideals. Here, national and civic consciousness developed as a result of human bonds—and not by the order of state institutions; here it was easier to devise the idea of civil society, precisely because the sovereign national state remained largely in the realm of dreams. The great cultural diversity of this region was to be—and frequently was—the best weapon of self-defense against the claims of ethnic or ideological power.

"The East European,"—wrote Barbara Toruńczyk in 1987—"already has his own kingdom. It emerges in the place where he lives. It is a realm of the spirit, but firmly rooted in reality. Today the East European of the post-Yalta generation can do without a cult of the West. . . . He gives new names to Europe and does it from right here at home."

What remains of this vision seven years after the fall of communism? Communism was like a freezer. Within it a diverse world of tensions and values, emotions and conflicts, was covered with a thick layer of ice. The defrosting process was a gradual one—so first we saw beautiful flowers, and only later, the rot. First came the grandeur of the peaceful fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. Later, a wave of xenophobic rage in Germany in 1992-1993, and the breakup of Czechoslovakia. First was the memorable "Autumn of the Nations" in 1989. Freedom returned to Central Europe, and Central Europe returned to history. It returned as a messenger not only of freedom and tolerance, but also of hatred and intolerance, both ethnic and religious. Conflicts—difficult to understand for Westerners who had perceived this territory simply as the Soviet Bloc—came to life once more. But these conflicts were understood all too well by the residents. This world of many nations and cultures had experienced the deep ambiguity of the national right of nations to sovereign existence: the right of one nation usually endangered the right of another nation. Franz Grillparzer, a great Austrian writer of the nineteenth century, warned prophetically against the road that leads "from humanism, through nationality, to bestiality."

For the American public, these meanderings of Central European democratic thought may appear a bit exotic. We were put to a double test: the test of captivity and the test of freedom. Hence, certainly some of our statements will appear unclear, others perfectly banal. But they were born out of a common inspiration: a passionate dream, about freedom and democratic order.

Democracy is not identical with freedom. Democracy is freedom written into the rule of law. Freedom in itself, without the limits imposed on it by law and tradition, is a road to anarchy and chaos—where the right of the strongest rules. For my generation the road to freedom began in 1968. It was in that year that tens of thousands of students filled the streets to demonstrate against the establishment. Was there any common denominator in the rebellions of students in Berkeley, Paris, and West Berlin—and those on the streets of Warsaw and Prague? At first glance, these were completely different phenomena: the students of Berkeley and Paris rejected the order of bourgeois democracy. The students of Prague and Warsaw were fighting for the freedom that bourgeois democracy guaranteed. Moreover, the students of Berkeley and Paris were fascinated by the communist project, and by the revolutionary rhetoric of Mao Tse-Tung—of which the students of Warsaw and Prague had had enough.

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Nevertheless, I think there were also some common threads: the anti-authoritarian spirit, a sense of emancipation, and the conviction that "to be a realist means to demand the impossible." And finally the need for rebellion, rooted in the conviction that "as long as the world is as it is, it is not worth it to die quietly in your own bed." "The world as it is". . . meant an unjust world. So there we are! At the root of the rebellion of 1968 was a need for justice: a need to have access to freedom and to bread, to truth and to power. There was something wonderfully uplifting in this rebellion. But there was also something frightening in it: the vandalized universities, destroyed libraries, barbarian slogans that substituted for intellectual reflection; and finally, violence, terrorism, and political killings. All of this also belongs to the heritage of 1968.

At that time we defined ourselves as socialists and people of the left. Why today does this formula cause in me an internal protest? Why do I myself not want to subscribe to any of the great ideologies? Here, I believe, lies the source of many arguments with my American friends. But possibly, this is more often an argument about language than about ideas. I once asked Jürgen Habermas: "What do we have left of the idealistic faith in the freedom-oriented socialism of the sixties?" His answer was: "Radical democracy." Since this formula is close to me, I will try to decipher it in my own way.

The system of parliamentary democracy and market economy has had fierce adversaries since its inception. Let's give them the symbolic names of "conservative" and "socialist." For the conservative, the democratic order was a negation of tradition—the defeat of the Christian spirit by a rapacious nihilism; the total victory of relativism over the world of absolute values. For the socialist, it was a system that generated, disguised, and perpetuated inequality and injustice. The conservative saw in humans wild beings who could not be domesticated by calls to reason. Only strong institutions could achieve this. The socialist, on the other hand, saw in humans good beings, forced by inhuman social conditions into animal behavior. Both conservative and socialist rejected the order of a freedom based on the free play of political and economic forces, on the specific domination of property and money.

The conservative held that the free market liberates in people an animal rapaciousness, while the socialist was of the opinion that it virtually requires an animal aggression. This is how the two great utopias were established: one retrospective and the other prospective, a utopia of conservative, hierarchical harmony, and a utopia of egalitarian, socialist harmony. One can debate the relations of both these utopias with the two totalitarianisms of the twentieth century. One can argue whether bolshevism was preying on the socialist idea, or whether the socialist idea provided bolshevism with its intellectual and political arguments. One can also try to explore whether fascism used the antiliberal arguments of conservatives and the dream of returning to a world of pre-industrial values, or whether the conservatives saw in fascism a way to defend themselves against demo-liberal destruction. But there is no doubt that these connections existed, even though we can find conservatives among the antifascist opposition, and we can find socialists among the most consistent adversaries of bolshevism. Both antiliberal utopias were turned into totalitarian systems. I lived in one of them for forty years; but I learned to distrust both.

Why did we rebel against communism? Why did we prefer to become a small repressed minority, rather than to join the majority that made careers in the world of totalitarian dictatorship? Well, we rejected communism for several different reasons: it was a lie, and we were searching for truth; it required conformity and we desired authenticity; communism was enslavement, fear, and censorship, and we desired freedom; it was an ongoing attack on the traditions and national identities that we held to be ours; it was social inequality and injustice, and we believed in equality and justice; communism was a grotesquely deficient economy, and we sought rationality, efficiency, and affluence; communism meant the suppression of religion, and we held freedom of conscience to be a fundamental human right. So, we rejected communism for reasons equally dear to a conservative, a socialist, and a liberal. In this way, a peculiar coalition of

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ideas emerged, which Leszek Kolakowski noted in his well-known essay, "How to be a Conservative-Liberal Socialist?" This coalition collapsed along with communism. But before it collapsed, the coalition had marked public debate with a specific tone of moral absolutism.

The moral absolutism of the anticommunist opposition required us to believe that communism is inherently evil, the devil of our times, and that resistance to communism is something naturally good, noble, and beautiful. The democratic opposition demonized communists and angelicized itself. I know because this moral absolutism was also my experience to a certain degree. I don't regret this experience, nor do I think I need to be ashamed of it. Standing up to the world of totalitarian dictatorship was to risk, or even to sacrifice, not only one's own safety but also that of one's friends and family. One had to believe that "Human life is a serious game," as a church historian of the communist period wrote. Each day one had to make choices that could have costly consequences. Those decisions were not the result of academic debates, but were moral acts frequently paid for with imprisonment or ruined careers. For active dissidents, this situation created a climate favorable to harsh and demanding valuations. One professed humanistic values, but lived within heroic values, with their fundamental principle of loyalty to one's own identity and loyalty to one's friends from the democratic opposition; loyalty to values that were betrayed and mocked; loyalty to the nation, to the church, and to tradition. "The weak side"—wrote Bogdan Cywiński—"was always under siege." The most outstanding witnesses of resistance in those years—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Havel, Zbigniew Herbert—defended absolute values. Herbert wrote: "let your sister Scorn not leave you / for the informers executioners cowards—they will win" ("The Envoy of Mr. Cogito"). And in the end it was we who won. But, woe to those moral absolutists who emerge victorious in political struggles—even if only for a while.

Moral absolutism is a great strength for individuals and groups struggling against dictatorship; but it is a weakness for individuals and groups active in a world where democratic procedures are being built on the rubble of totalitarian dictatorships. There is no room there for the utopias of a just, harmonious, and perfect world—or for moral absolutism. Both of these come down to anachronism or hypocrisy; both threaten the democratic order. Because a democratic world is a chronically imperfect one, a world of freedom (sinful, corrupt, and fragile), after the collapse of totalitarian necessity (also, luckily, imperfect).

This world not only broke the coalition of antitotalitarian ideas, but also revealed their contradictory character. Egalitarianism found itself in conflict with the principles of liberal economy; conservatism challenged the spirit of liberal tolerance. Dilemmas appeared that the socialist, the conservative, and the liberal resolved in different ways. Let us mention some of them: dealing with the communist past, the shape of the market, the fundamental principles of the state, the place of the church and religious values in the new reality.

For the socialist, the central issues will be to give a human face to a rapacious market economy; to defend the poorest sectors in society; the secular character of the state; and tolerance toward people of different faiths and nationalities.

The conservative would bring back the continuity of national symbols, would fight for a Christian reshaping of the Constitution and institutions, would warn against the dangers of liberalism and relativism, and would demand harsh treatment for people of the old regime.

The liberal will say: the economy first—economic growth, clear rules of the market, stable systems of taxation, privatization, exchangeable currency. He or she would be a careful defender of the idea of a tolerant state—with regard to the Catholic church, to national minorities, to the neighboring countries, and to the past. Each of these three will have to formulate ideas in a new context: the context of a populist and still unnamed ideology. There is a bit of fascism in it and a bit of communism; a bit of egalitarianism and a bit of clericalism; a radical critique of the Enlightenment and the harsh language of moral absolutism. At the same time, a nostalgia will appear, surprising to all—for the socialist, the

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liberal and the conservative. A nostalgia the security of the "good old communist days," when, as they said, "the state pretended to pay the people, and the people pretended to work."

One must know this context in order to understand the dilemmas of the new postcommunist democracies. Dealing with the communist past has divided voices for justice from the voices for reconciliation. The first demanded the methodical punishment of the guilty parties. The second proposed a process of national reconciliation. Both those attitudes at times took on a grotesque form: the first went so far as to call for discrimination against the members of the communist apparatus; the second behaved as if they had forgotten that the dictatorship ever existed. The formula for which I was a spokesman: "Amnesty—yes; amnesia—no"—turned out to be too difficult for the people of the democratic opposition.

The dispute over the shape of the market economy has taken on the form of a social conflict, in which the arguments of socialists and of conservatives have come together in a criticism of the policies of liberal transformation. Unemployment, social inequality, and the frustration of employees have resulted in a slowing down of the pace of reform. The dispute over the shape of the state—should it be national or civil—has turned out to be fundamental, especially in multinational countries that have just regained independence after their long enslavement. Conservative partisans of the national principle emphasized the need to reconstruct the ethnic fabric destroyed through years of official denationalization; the partisans of the civil principle have defended the fundamental tenets of democracy against intolerant chauvinism.

And finally, the Catholic church. After years of repression, the church has reasserted its claim to a place in the public debate. In communities where national identity frequently coincided with religious identity, there has been a natural temptation to allow a religious establishment. The church has called for a constitution and criminal code that would be in accordance with religious norms. The debate over abortion has in fact been an argument about the axiological foundation of the state. Does the legality of abortion imply approval of the murder of unborn children? Does the criminalization of abortion constitute an attack on the fundamental right of a woman to decide about her own maternity? These arguments made for extreme emotional tension: there have been constant appeals to moral arguments; the language of war has been used. Two opposing worlds of values have confronted one another. The heroism of the people who had resisted repression has shown its second face: intolerant, fanatical, and opposed to new, modernizing ideas. This is a natural turn of events in the postcommunist democracies.

None of these disputes is fatal for democracy, which after all is a permanent debate. Fatal, indeed, would be such an intensification of conflict that all sides become incapable of compromise. Then it would be easy to undermine the procedures of the democratic state. Radical movements—whether under black or red banners—gladly use democracy in order to obliterate it. In the meantime, democracy is neither black nor red. Democracy is gray, is established only with difficulty, and its quality and flavor can be recognized best when it comes under the pressure of advancing red or black ideas. Democracy is not infallible, because in its debates all are equal. This is why it lends itself to manipulation, and may be helpless against corruption. This is why, frequently, it chooses banality over excellence, shrewdness over nobility, empty promise over true competence. Democracy is a continuous articulation of particular interests, a diligent search for compromise among them, a marketplace of passions, emotions, hatreds and hopes; it is eternal imperfection, a mixture of sinfulness, saintliness, and monkey business. This is why the seekers of a moral state and of a perfectly just society do not like democracy. Yet only democracy, having the capacity to question itself, also has the capacity to correct its own mistakes. Dictatorships, whether red or black, destroy the human capacity for creation, they kill the taste for human life and, eventually, life itself. Only gray democracy, with its human rights, with institutions of civil society, can replace weapons with arguments. Parliamentarianism arose as an alternative to civil wars—conservatives can argue with liberals and social demo-

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crats whether that was the result of common sense or the wisdom that comes with misfortune.

The subject of democracy is people, not ideas. And this is why, in the framework of democratic institutions, citizens can meet and collaborate independently of their faith, nationality, or ideology. Today the classic ideological positions—liberalism, conservatism, socialism—do not dominate public debate about taxes, health reform, or insurance. Yet in each of those debates, there is a need for socialist concern for the poorest, a conservative defense of tradition, and a liberal reflection on efficiency and growth. Each of those values is needed in democratic politics. It is these that give color and diversity to our life; it is these that equip us with the capacity to choose; it is thanks to their mutual contradictions that we can afford inconsistency, experimentation, changes of opinion, and changes of government. In opposition to so-called "corrupt demo-liberalism," the fanaticism of ideological inquisitors offers again and again new projects for a "promised land." Fundamentalists of different varieties condemn the moral relativism of democracy, as though it were the state that should be the guardian of moral virtue. We, however, the defenders of gray democracy, do not grant the state this right. We want human virtues to be guarded by the human conscience. That is why we say, "gray is beautiful." And all this has been told to you by a frog from Central Europe.

Translated from the Polish by ELZBIETA MATYNIA □

This article is taken from the East and Central Europe Program *Bulletin* (December 1996) of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research.

Ira Katznelson Comments

Adam Michnik's introspective and witty "Gray is Beautiful" characteristically possesses broader significance than its putative subject, the shift from "tests of captivity" to "tests of freedom" in postcommunist Europe. He scrutinizes the limits of the civil-society-oriented dreams of his fellow dissidents in the political rough and tumble after 1989 and grapples with the responsibilities that come with democratic politics. He challenges the children of 1968, including himself, to reconsider our ideological heritage and develop a keener awareness of the dangers of fanaticism and the burdens of liberal democracy.

Michnik addresses as "the source of many arguments with my American friends" his refusal to define himself, as he and fellow opposition leaders once had, as "socialists and people of the left." He has turned instead to a framework of "radical democracy." I find myself in agreement with most of what he has written, but wish to raise a gentle "internal protest" of my own about one or two aspects of his piece.

It is no surprise that Michnik is uneasy with "socialism" as legacy or guide. The utopian Bolshevik version—the one he experienced in and out of prison—suppressed freedom, produced social injustice, despised cultural difference, and violated liberalism's most cherished values. Advancing a perfectionist morality, it justified the worst horrors by appeals to a radiant future. Surely against his own intentions, however, Michnik presents this version of totalitarianism with a posthumous victory: the sole possession of the socialist legacy.

The communists knew otherwise. *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*'s entry on "Reformism" upbraided social democracy for its allegiance to parliamentary politics, and claimed that governing socialists in the West "could not establish the type of equality demanded by socialism." Indeed not, because the liberal socialism such leaders as Olof Palme and Willy Brandt sought to advance inside parliamentary and market institutions differed profoundly from bolshevism. It unequivocally accepted the separation of the zones of property and sovereignty, while seeking to utilize government instruments to compensate capitalism's propertyless. It gave up the

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impossible dream of a future beyond scarcity and settled for meliorative, but still considerable, egalitarian goals.

Near the end of his lecture, Michnik recognizes that a "normal politics" socialism of this kind (which he describes too narrowly as "care for the poorest" rather than as a programmatic approach to the management of market economies inside liberal institutions) can contribute shape and color to an otherwise gray democracy. But is it really possible to imagine "radical democracy" without such a "socialism," whatever we might choose to call it?

Michnik's conflation of totalitarian and liberal socialism makes it difficult for him to elaborate the content of his "gray is beautiful" politics. He is correct, of course, to remind us not only about the seductive power of past antiliberal ideologies, but also that new and yet-unnamed combinations of red and brown threaten today to overwhelm decent liberal regimes, especially those still young and fragile. Ideologies flashing very bright colors, he rightly advises, can kill democracy.

Alas, liberal democracies lacking in color are also vulnerable; not just to the demagoguery of the anti-liberal right or left, but to mass cynicism when party politics does not seem to matter. Liberal democracy *needs* ideology if its politics is to have meaningful "brand differentiation" and if policy debates are to be motivated by more than technical fixes. Michnik reduces conservatism, liberalism, and socialism to values that must be present inside each policy debate, making experimentation and inconsistency possible. But he underestimates how the dynamic, provisional politics he prefers also requires a degree of steady principle to give order to competing packages of ideas and policies. Otherwise, politics reduces to voracious cupidity by the political class.

After 1989, Michnik notes, the opposition coalition among religious traditionalists, laissez-faire advocates, and democratic socialists fell apart. He worries that some of its members will become obsessed with retribution against their former oppressors and thus unwittingly promote fanaticism. He seems less disquieted by the risks of technocratic problem-solving. Though the obverse of communist zealotry, Michnik's determinedly pragmatic orientation to politics ironically may be ill-suited to withstand just the assaults on democracy he fears. As one child of 1968, he may think it prudent to set the socialist tradition entirely aside as so bruised by totalitarianism that it no longer has anything to offer. As another, I worry that unless we keep the highest ideals of the left alive inside the liberal political tradition, liberal democracy itself will be drained of its promise. □

IN MEMORIAM
ANDREI SINYAVSKY
1925-1997

We mourn the death of our friend and contributor Andrei Sinyavsky. Writing under the pseudonym Abram Tertz, Sinyavsky was one of the most important dissident voices in the Soviet Union during the late 1950s and early 1960s. After being tried for "disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda" in 1965, and serving six years in a Soviet prison camp, he emigrated to France, where he began writing under his own name. He was the author of many distinguished works of fiction and nonfiction, including *The Trial Begins, A Voice from the Chorus*, and *Goodnight.* We are proud to note that it was *Dissent* that brought his work to the attention of the English-speaking world when, in 1960, we published "On Socialist Realism," his remarkable portrait of cultural and political life in the Soviet Union. He was a gifted writer and a courageous man.

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Erazim Kohák

CONSOLIDATING FREEDOM IN CENTRAL EUROPE

When the Iron Curtain disintegrated, the newly freed lands of what was once the Soviet empire had to start from scratch. The civil structure of our societies was devastated, our political structures perverted, our perceptions distorted, our economies in shambles. In five short years, we have managed to nurture a new civic consciousness, to build the basic framework of democracy, to lay the foundations of a viable economy. There is so much to praise, so much of which to be proud. That is the real story: the success of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Republics, in rebuilding free and democratic societies.

As a Czech I would like to speak only of our successes—to play the role of the bard who sings the praises of the *polis*. But I am not only a Czech; I am also a philosopher. Philosophy since Socrates's time has played the role of the gadfly, consolidating freedom by pointing to its faults and flaws. In that spirit, I want to examine the difficulties confronting democratization in the newly freed lands.

What are the problems of women and men trying to build free societies in the countries that inherited the democratic ideal but not a democratic reality after the end of the cold war?

Some of these problems are *psychological*. Decades of bondage inculcated habits of servility and irresponsibility. Consolidating freedom means learning the habits of self-confidence and responsibility. Other problems are *conceptual*. People for whom, for decades, "free" meant no more than "pro-American" and "socialist" was a code word for "pro-Russian" seldom have a clear idea of what freedom and democracy might mean. Finally, there are *structural* problems, built into the situation of peoples living in the shadow of a great power, however freedom-loving and democratic those peoples might be.

Perhaps the most basic structural problem is simply the sheer, overwhelming disproportion of resources. In Central Europe, hopelessly weak governments, often run by well-meaning amateurs, confront the immense power of multinational corporations and international mafias. I shall long remember the scene, shortly after the end of communist rule, of a Czechoslovak policeman parking his ancient Skoda and searching his pockets for a coin so he could call his police station from a pay phone—which, as it turned out, was out of order. The international drug cartels, veterans of Sicilian and Colombian drug wars, were moving in with supercharged Mercedeses, cellular phones, and tested managerial know-how. There was simply no contest.

Nor were the multinational corporations moving into the vacuum any less powerful. The negotiations between Skoda and Volkswagen are only the best known instance among many. Through no fault of their own, Czech managers were not in the same league. Many of them assumed that their foreign partners would provide them with massive injections of capital and help them modernize so that they could compete with them in exports. The multinationals did not prove to be particularly vicious, but neither did they prove particularly benign. Wholly legitimately, their concern was to make profits. A country like the Czech or Slovak Republic might well serve that purpose better as a source of cheap labor and a market for inferior products than as a strong competitor.

It would be unfair to expect a multinational corporation to function as a more affluent version of the Peace Corps—and unrealistic to expect organized crime to do so. It is much more reasonable to expect the government to suppress

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organized crime and to set rules for doing business that will allow corporations to be profitable without being destructive. However, after the experience of communism, most Czechs and Slovaks find it hard to expect anything positive from the government. In stronger, well-established countries, vigorous domestic industries can help balance multinational ones. In the postcommunist countries, however, there are no such domestic industries. The task falls entirely on the government, which is woefully underequipped for dealing with it—and after the experience of the communist regimes, also loath to do so.

Consolidating freedom in the wake of the cold war may well mean first of all building up governments strong and competent enough—and willing—to stand up to the Mafias and the multinationals. The mood of the time, though, is the opposite. "Downsizing" is the word of the day. Western governments, reflecting their own experience, tend to be generous with advice for scaling down governments. Survivors of the Soviet era accept it gladly, since for decades government had been the sole threat to freedom. Today the threat comes from a different quarter—from a government too weak to contend with the forces, benign or malevolent, that confront it. Weak local governments trying to cope with powerful international forces may be the most basic structural problem of the post-cold war era in Central Europe.

A second problem is closely related—the influx of capital, in the form of aid and investment, encouraging a polarization of society. Such capital, to be sure, is most welcome and sorely needed. However, no matter how well intentioned, even if all of it were in the form of outright aid, a massive influx of capital will generate an artificially affluent stratum, in part composed of foreign workers, in part composed of locals parasitic on them, maintaining a living standard wholly discontinuous with the domestic economy. This is not simply a matter of some people being more affluent than others; it is a matter of qualitative difference, of a radical discontinuity.

Take an example: an average Czech worker today earns about six thousand crowns a month. A poorly paid one might earn as little as four thousand; a very well-paid one, a physician or a university professor, might earn eight or even ten thousand. However, to sustain the "entrepreneurial" lifestyle requires an income of fifty thousand or more.

The difference is staggering—and destructive. It encourages corruption. The affluent stratum absorbs a disproportionate share of incoming foreign capital and re-exports it by purchasing cars and status symbols such as trips abroad, leaving little to trickle down to the domestic economy. Ordinary citizens can look only to corruption—or to emigration—to imitate the lifestyle that the affluent make fashionable. Worst of all, the polarization is difficult to integrate with democracy. Democracy requires at least a basic, broad equality, humans living in the same world. They may live in opposite sides of that world, the rich and the poor, but it needs to be recognizably the same world. The massive influx of foreign capital makes that virtually impossible.

Consolidating freedom in Central Europe in the wake of the cold war means building governments that can cope with Mafias and multinationals, and that are willing to counter the inevitable polarization of society, preventing the impoverishment of the many and the bloating of the few. The means available are many, from graduated income taxes to massive public housing construction to supporting public transportation and discouraging luxury automobiles. However, the will has to be there—and, for wholly understandable reasons, it is not. Central European governments today, still raw from years of communist egalitarianism, encourage polarization, praise affluence, and do nothing to prevent poverty. It is understandable, but the long-range results can only be destructive.

There is a third structural reason why the consolidation of freedom in Central Europe is such a daunting challenge: the breakdown of civil society.

That breakdown is the product of conscious effort. The communist regime in Czechoslovakia, for all its rhetoric, was not at all socialist. Just the opposite: it feared all citizen initiative. Suspecting Czech and Slovak society—with good reason—of loyalty to old habits and modes

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of thought, it systematically attempted to destroy all traditional bonds and associations. Even horseback riders could associate only as an equestrian section of the local Association for Cooperation with the Armed Forces. The aim was to replace all independent social structures with vertical command structures, making sure that nothing could ever take place without a command being given.

The results were felt long before the fall of the old regime. As the command economy destroyed all economic initiative, so the command society destroyed all social initiative. Then, when the command structure collapsed, what was left resembled Machiavelli's Italy or the modern state as Hegel imagined it: a mass of atomized individuals ruled by a central government. That is the basis on which Central Europe's leaders are seeking to build democracy.

A command democracy, though, is a contradiction in terms. As the American experience shows, democracy must grow from below, from the grass roots. Democracy is not just a way of selecting leaders: it is a mode of life that grows out of a thousand individual initiatives. Americans learn democracy in their clubs, their town meetings, their churches—it would be difficult to grow up in America and not learn the rudiments of Robert's *Rules of Order*. And not only that: Americans also learn decency, habits of consideration and cooperation, and attitudes of respect through the daily functioning of their civil society.

To many of Central Europe's powerful figures, like the Czech Republic's prime minister, Václav Klaus, the very term "civil society" is anathema. Klaus's government has vigorously blocked any laws that would give special status to non-profit organizations. The Save the Children Federation is subject to the same brutal sales and property taxes as IBM.

Again, it is understandable. Given our experience with central planning, the government is dogmatically committed to removing all fetters on the workings of the invisible hand. A government that has just replaced Karl Marx with Adam Smith might well consider an atomized aggregate of citizens preferable to a civil society. Yet a society with no constraints becomes a war of all against all. This is why fostering the growth of civil society is one of our most urgent tasks.

The obstacles to consolidating democracy are not only structural but also psychological and sociological. Quite simply, hardly anyone has a clear conception of just what democracy is supposed to mean. Mine is the one country in the former Soviet bloc that had both a democratic tradition and practical experience with modern democracy. Even before World War I, the western part of Austro-Hungary was recognizably democratic. Future Czech parliamentarians, including T.G. Masaryk, one of the great philosophers of democracy, earned their spurs in the imperial *Reichsrat*, Austria's parliament. Under Masaryk's presidency, Czechoslovakia between the wars was genuinely a bulwark of freedom and a refuge for the persecuted in a troubled Europe. Those were the ideals invoked by the reformers and the dissidents of the communist years, Václav Havel among them. Yet when in 1994 pollsters inquired into the meaning of democracy in the popular mind, more than 60 percent of the respondents in the Czech lands identified democracy with the absence of constraints on individuál actions. To most of them, even traffic regulations seemed "undemocratic," though they accepted them as necessary. Democracy seems to represent something between omnipotence and egoism, freed of all reality constraints. In the other half of the former Czechoslovakia, the consensus was even more striking: nearly 80 percent of the respondents identified democracy with consumer affluence. For some it meant having a car, a home, and a secure position. Others expressed strong agreement (or "mostly agreed") with the statement that democracy means that everything is available and people have enough money to buy it.

Since coercion and shortages were endemic throughout our forty-two years of communism, such perceptions are not surprising. But neither can they form the basis of a democratic society. If the substance of democracy were affluence, then the firm authoritarian hand of Asia's four tigers would represent the democratic ideal. If, on the other hand, the substance of democracy were anarchy, then democracy would mean a permanent revolt against the reality principle,

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condemned to an adolescent futility.

What *does* democracy mean? Multiparty elections? Perhaps, though that is hardly enough. Elections can be no more than civil war fought by other means, a less bloody way of choosing a despot. It is the quality of daily life between elections that makes a community democratic.

Throughout history, social organization has been based on the assumption that most people need to be ruled and only a few are capable of ruling. Democracy is a revolt against this idea. At its purest, it is the audacious belief that all humans are or can become capable of governing themselves.

That is an ideal often derided, and it is vulnerable to ridicule. Yet it is what the democracy of the Swiss community or the New England town meeting is all about. In a New Hampshire town meeting, citizens vote to tax themselves. They need not be coerced: if they want the Monadnock Visiting Nurse Service, they are mature enough to pay for it.

That is not a matter of "direct" as against "representative" democracy, but of civic maturity and immaturity. A town meeting can become tyrannical, and representative government can be thoroughly democratic: it depends on whether the community is mature enough to respect the common good or whether it has to be coerced into it. A people that can rule itself need not be ruled. How democratic a community will be between elections will depend on the civic maturity, the voluntary regard for public good, of all its citizens.

The problem is that for forty-two years our rulers spoke of civic maturity but encouraged the precise opposite. The regime was paternalistic in the extreme, arrogating unto itself a total monopoly of responsibility and initiative. Paternalism, whether that of a father or of a ruler, inevitably encourages immaturity. Maturity grows out of freedom and responsibility, the two things totalitarian rulers deny their subjects. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of consolidating freedom is the need for personal transformation, the task of building not a state but a community of mature citizens.

There is a second trait crucial to the democracy in everyday life on which the consolidation of freedom depends. It is the posture of cooperation rather than confrontation. The totalitarian mentality is one that sees the world in terms of friend or foe. A basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism as it was taught throughout the former Soviet empire was "thinking in terms of class war"—who will prevail, who will be defeated. Even planting a garden became "the battle of grain." Leninism thrived on warlike rhetoric and warlike thought. For that matter, all cold war thought did the same.

Democracy is the direct opposite of this mentality. It is thinking in terms of partners in difference, seeking common solutions to common problems with mutual respect. A sign of a mature democratic community is that a majority of 51 percent will refrain from carrying out its program if a minority of 49 percent is adamantly opposed to it. Democracy is about seeking the broadest possible support for the most broadly acceptable solutions, not about enforcing the will of a momentary majority. Masaryk is often quoted as saying that "Democracy is discussion." It is a quest for consensus, respecting both the diversity of individuals and the good of the community.

I would suggest a third trait of democratic coexistence: the conviction that the task of government is not just to advance our individual or collective self-interest but to tame the strong and protect the weak. That, again, is a radical reversal of what humankind has taken for granted. Throughout history, governments have been instruments of the powerful for keeping the weak in their place. Democracy is the audacious attempt to reverse this age-old equation. That again is something difficult to present in the postcommunist world. The principle of taming the strong and protecting the poor is familiar enough. The problem comes when we try to identify the players: the strong who need to be tamed and the weak who need to be protected. For forty-two years, the government was all-powerful: it held an effective monopoly on all economic and social initiative and wielded the means to enforce its will. As for business, it did not figure in the equation at all. In light of the violence of the government's rhetoric against it, we tended to assume that it must be on our side, the side of the weak.

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Then the powerful regime collapsed, replaced by a weak and hesitant government. The powerful now were the monopolies left over from the old regime, the multinational corporations moving in with colonial arrogance, and the ruthless international mafias.

Old habits die hard, though. After four decades of autocratic rule, Central Europeans go on distrusting the government while not even suspecting the powerful concerns that are muscling in. The weak in the postcommunist world do not wish to be protected, and the governments do not wish to protect them. In the name of economic growth, governments throughout the former Soviet empire are once more becoming the instrument of the powerful, keeping the weak in their place. We see the most ironic and tragic metaphor of our condition when the government tames the environmental movement in behalf of an international cement concern or a domestic power monopoly—and all that to the applause of the very people whose land and lungs will be devastated by strip mining, massive dams, and car exhausts.

Some might argue that in terms of the way I have defined democracy, there are no truly democratic societies in the world—at most, there are societies that select their rulers by popular election rather than by primogeniture, conspiracy, or civil war. Yet there is a vast difference in the quality of life among various countries, and it is not just a difference in levels of individual consumption. It is, far more, a difference in the expectations that a society holds out for itself. A society committed to seeking noncoercive, consensual solutions, to fostering civic maturity and to taming the powerful and protecting the weak, however short it may be of the goal, is on the way to consolidating freedom.

A new age begins when a new story starts to take shape. The story of our youth had been about the revolt of the wretched of the earth ushering in a new age of social justice. That story was utterly discredited by the brutality and sleaziness of "actually existing socialism." For a shimmering moment it seemed that the new story would be the one told by Václav Havel—a story about love and truth triumphing over hatred and lies. The story was drowned out all too soon by yet another story—this time about "democratic capitalism" triumphing over the totalitarian collectivism of the Evil Empire.

This is the story told by the current government of the Czech part of what was once Havel's Czechoslovakia. As this story goes, all was well with the world as long as private property owners pursued their individual goals, guided, as if by an invisible hand, to promote the common good. Yes, there were such problems as the depression and the world war, but those were only minor blemishes. Fundamentally, all was well. It was only the Communists, interfering with private property and freedom of enterprise, who destroyed the idyll. However, their crime brought its own punishment. Without private initiative, the collectivized economy collapsed. Now, if only we privatize radically enough, the market will cure all our ills and all will be well once more.

When this is the prevailing story, even speaking of a common good or of civil society becomes suspect. Not democratization, but privatization and the abolition of all constraints on "property rights" are presented as the way to consolidate freedom. It would take a brave person to hint that anonymous multinational corporations displace private shopkeepers at least as effectively as the communists ever did—or that the problem with the old regime was that it destroyed civil liberty, and only derivatively that it robbed people of their private property.

Today we are told that privatization will protect the common good. An anonymous state enterprise, we are told, will clear-cut a forest or strip-mine away a village for a quick profit, while a private owner simply would not do that. A private owner *cares* as an anonymous manager does not. Once private owners replace state agencies, we will not need rules for the exercise of ownership.

To a Westerner, this might seem hopelessly naive. In the Czech lands, it seems credible because it often *is* true of individual owners. We have it ever before us: the tender restoration of state property by private owners, often working miracles of mighty effort with all the love long denied. Only very gradually and still not out loud are we beginning to admit to ourselves the ambiguity of ownership that the West knows only too well. Not all owners love their prop-

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erty more than profit; not all owners are private individuals bonded to their property by love and labor. Many more are absentees, many others are anonymous corporations whose investment decisions are governed by computers programmed solely with an eye to quarterly balance sheets.

In a powerful emotional response to the communitarian experiment just ended, it is tempting to reject any and all limitations upon the exercise of ownership and to insist on "property rights" as the true meaning of freedom. Never mind that we are being poisoned by exhaust fumes: we have a "right" to drive a car! Never mind that our streams and forests are being destroyed: we have a "right" to make a profit! Never mind that people are being brutally exploited: we have a "right" to private property! For that matter, never mind that police are being killed: we have a "right" to sell armor-piercing bullets.

Yet humans, however callous and blind we might at times be, do have a conscience and are capable of recognizing the long-range damage that greed can do to our earth and to our future on it. If we abuse the earth and our fellow beings in the name of property rights, future idealists will take up the banner of the wretched of the earth, of the abused and the exploited, and launch humanity on another cycle of revolution and disillusion.

Consolidating freedom cannot mean alternating a robber baron phase and a "Shining Path" phase, alternately enshrining property as a sacred right and condemning it as theft—while continuing to operate in both phases with the same primitive conception of property as domination, the right to use or abuse, alienate or destroy. The consolidation of freedom demands a conception of ownership as stewardship, as an obligation to love and care for what we claim to own. We need to tell a different story, one of the earth as entrusted into our hands, of responsibility for the earth as a basic human trait. Perhaps this is best expressed by the Native Americans who say that the earth is not our own, that we have it on loan from our children. Or perhaps it is best expressed by those believers who say, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

The future of freedom, I suspect, depends on our ability to generate a conception of property that will be compatible with the common good and with the survival of the earth. The communist experiment with abolishing private interest failed miserably. The current experiment with abolishing all constraints on private interest promises to fail no less miserably and, given the ecological state of the earth, quite possibly with drastic and irreversible consequences. If freedom is to survive, we have few tasks as urgent as forging a conception of ownership as neither a theft nor a right, but as a trust. □

Tadeusz Kowalik

THE POLISH REVOLUTION

It is a banal historical truth that the working class played a crucial role in the bourgeois revolutions of continental Europe. Oskar Lange's comments on the subject are especially perceptive:

> After the war, when the remnants of the *ancien régime* collapsed in all the countries of Central Europe—in Germany, Austria, Hungary, in the Czech lands, and in Poland—the bourgeois democratic republics that emerged from the ruins of the Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanov monarchies were created by the labor movement. Lacking sufficient power to give the republics it had created a proletarian class character, the labor movement was unable to prevent them becoming bourgeois class states. There emerged . . . a tragicomic situation: workers' parties created republics that were in essence bourgeois class states.

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During the years 1980-1992, Poland experienced a repetition, in virtually classic form, of this tragicomic situation (although many Solidarity activists and some advisers to the 1980 strikers—including this author—find it hard to discern anything comic about it). The largest labor movement in Europe brought about a social upheaval from which there emerged one of the most inequitable social systems that the continent has seen in this century.

I am not referring—at least, not only—to the fact that the industrial working class employed in "the fossilized mammoths of socialist industry" was bound to lose out because a developed modern economy demands a completely different structure. Such assertions are part of the new legitimating ideology. But what about workers employed in the private sector? More often than not, they are deprived of the most elementary workers' rights, of the right to organize unions. Haven't they lost out? What about small-scale farmers? And nurses and teachers? Of course, these latter professions' material decline and loss of prestige are partly offset by the freedom they have regained. This is an enormous plus. But for other social groups, this much-acclaimed freedom has little significance. Their material existence is now so shaky that they are unable to take advantage of their newfound freedom.

"Alas, we have won!" exclaimed Lech Walesa when the election results were announced on June 4, 1989. No doubt, he failed to realize just how much this exclamation conveyed. At that time he was still a manual worker and trade union leader, but the new social order soon brought an extremely high level of institutionalized and stable unemployment, a considerable increase in the number of poor, and "a real revolution in incomes."

Only a few years later, we have overtaken many countries of western Europe in income inequality. During periods of cyclical boom, unemployment may decline slightly, and the number of those who have been marginalized may fall somewhat. But income inequality, unemployment, and marginalization remain the defining characteristics of the new order. In this situation, the liberals' favorite slogan about equality of opportunity has no meaning for a large proportion of the population.

The new system has provided opportunities, first and foremost, to economists and lawyers. To quote our ex-president: "We were supposed to create the rule of law, but we have created the rule of lawyers!" Things turned out to be positive with a minus sign! Positive for the lawyers and economists, and minus for everyone else.

I see Poland's revolution as a revolution of the epigones, as a pale imitation of an earlier revolution, in two senses. First, the revolutions in Central Europe about which Lange wrote were lost by the workers' parties at the political level—not at the social level: across the region, these revolutions ushered in the first major breakthrough in labor legislation. Polish workers, for example, were granted an eight-hour day and other rights. Some people considered that the workers were bought off in this fashion at a time when revolution was knocking at the door.

Meanwhile, in present-day Poland primitive capitalism of a nineteenth-century kind is flourishing. The temporary alliance between workers and intellectuals, who were put in charge of policy, together with the support of the Catholic church and international financial institutions, enabled the peaceful transformation of a workers' revolution into a bourgeois revolution. The spectacular collapse of the communists helped to instill repugnance for anything that was even remotely associated with socialism. Those who had been proud worker-revolutionaries were once again viewed as uncouth laborers. Jacek Kuron was the only member of the new political elite to confess publicly that the great defeat of the workers caused him to lose sleep. And he was the only one to disturb the complacency of the elite at a major gala organized by the Freedom Union in August 1996, when he argued that yet again the costs of Poland's transformation had been borne by the workers.

But this revolution was a revolution of epigones in yet another sense. Bourgeois revolutions of this kind are increasingly relics of the past. In many countries (for example, Austria, Finland, and more recently Spain), modern economies based on private property emerged without the primitive accumulation that was char-

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acteristic of the United States, Britain, or even Germany. Such a development was possible because, on the one hand, capital was dispersed among shareholders, and, on the other, because these more recent revolutions took place in countries which already possessed large-scale industry and thus had no need of the legendary first million dollars derived from speculation, theft, or fraud in order to make the transition from manufacturing to industrial production. For the same reasons, it was no longer necessary to impoverish some in order to increase the capital of others.

A revolution based on mass unemployment, impoverishment, and glaring inequalities was thus by no means a necessary condition of further economic modernization in Poland. Thanks to a combination of circumstances, however, this is exactly the kind of revolution that took place. Things could have turned out differently. There was, after all, an alternative program, drawn up at the "Round Table" negotiations that preceded the 1989 elections. This agreement between representatives of the then opposition and the ruling elite envisaged not only the restoration of market equilibrium through price liberalization (accompanied, it is true, by an excessively high level of wage indexation) but also "a new economic order." This was to involve, on the one hand, increased worker participation and, on the other, "the unfettered transformation of property relations," a process that was to be guaranteed in the Constitution. The proposed National Property Fund would be authorized to "dispose of state property only by selling it in accordance with principles set out in law."

The sale and lease of not only housing, land, and shops, but also workshops, factories, and shares were to provide a substantial tax base that would go a long way toward reducing the budget deficit. It was also proposed that a stock exchange be established no later than the fall of 1991. This program proposed, then, the most radical of all reforms, but without "shock therapy." The same principles, formulated more generally, were reiterated in the electoral program of the opposition, so the notion of gradual but steady privatization of state enterprises was widely endorsed by opposition groups. It is thus untrue that privatization was, as some people argue, "essentially ignored" in the Round Table agreement. It has recently become commonplace to consign the agreement to oblivion or to present it as just one more attempt to reform the previous system. The proposals cited here contradict these assertions. One thing that was certainly not envisaged at the time was the privileged position subsequently accorded to newly created private firms. The Round Table agreement adhered to the principle of equal rights for all forms of property. In proposing a radical reform, the agreement did not go into too much detail as to the precise shape of the new economic order. On the other hand, the agreement stipulated nothing that would be incompatible with, say, the Austrian or Scandinavian model.

It could not have been otherwise, given that reform proposals were based on the assumption that the new system would be created in cooperation with the trade unions, on the basis of a social contract of the kind exemplified by August 1980. Breaking with the freshly minted social contract, the new Solidarity-led government proclaimed in 1989 a great leap forward to private property and a market economy based on allegedly tried and trusted models and thus free of all experimentation. In fact, precisely because of the method chosen, this great leap forward turned out to be a major experiment, in many respects reminiscent of the postwar great leap to a centrally planned economy.

The question is: why did Solidarity and the old official unions, which still retained some influence, as well as the old power elite, agree to this leap forward? This complex question demands a lengthy answer. Here, I will say only that, in my opinion, the retreat of Solidarity is the most easily explained. Emerging only recently from the underground, preoccupied with organizational matters, weakened by the exodus of intellectuals, Solidarity believed that it had won the revolution because people it trusted were in power. The movement continued to trust Walesa, who was in such a hurry to support the new power group that he accepted the Balcerowicz program without familiarizing himself with its contents, without any negotiations, and before it was publicly presented.

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In the political sense, the Solidarity revolution also brought with it at least two paradoxes. The first is related to the Catholic church's far-reaching involvement in bringing about these changes. If one takes seriously the contemporary social teaching of the church, it is clear that the outcome of this revolution was the opposite of that intended. The basic principle of the church's social teaching is worker participation as a precondition of equilibrium between capital and labor. This principle was codified in the papal encyclical *Laborem exercens*. The program adopted at Solidarity's first congress was also based on this principle as well as on socialist tradition. In the behavior of high-ranking members of the clergy I detect numerous signs of frustration. The sources of this frustration are not always clear, but one seems indisputable: the church shares Solidarity's sense that what once looked like a victorious revolution has turned out to be a defeat.

One more paradox. We must not forget that the Balcerowicz plan was passed (almost unanimously) by a parliament in which the opposition occupied only one-third of the seats, as a result of a preelection agreement between them and the communists. This is even more startling than the "peaceful" relinquishing of power on the part of the country's former rulers. After a few years of stormy *intermezzo*, the former rulers became the willing agents of an imitative bourgeois revolution. It is possible that some of these people deluded themselves about the severity of the recession that would inevitably emerge from the Balcerowicz plan. It was impossible, however, for anyone to have illusions about the nature of the social system that was to emerge. In this regard, Balcerowicz's pronouncements were brutally frank. It seems incontrovertible that shifting perceptions of self-interest among the *nomenklatura*, many of whom had already begun to enrich themselves through the acquisition of state assets, provided a major impetus for approval of the Balcerowicz program.

Solidarity found itself deserted by its intellectuals, seduced by the prospect of power and money. But it also experienced something much worse. A large proportion—perhaps the majority—of the union's former advisers went over to the opposing camp, distorting or even pouring scorn on the history of Solidarity. The least extreme of these distortions usually portrays the Solidarity of 1980-1981 exclusively as an anti-communist movement struggling for civil society and sovereignty. The working-class nature of its demands and the social composition of the movement are systematically ignored. Sometimes this amounts "only" to unintentional one-sidedness. In the worst case, it constitutes the persistent repetition of the myth of a "second Solidarity"—a populist, irresponsible opponent of market reforms. In fact, if we take account of the scale of the afflictions that have befallen the working class, we can only marvel at its restraint. Wage demands that are characterized as "socialist" or even "Bolshevik" would still leave workers with wages far below what they earned before the recession—in other words, below a level that many of today's liberals had criticized as being far too low. While national income is now greater than it was under the previous regime, anyone who demands the restoration of previous wage levels is considered a troublemaker, an opponent of reforms and the market economy.

The rift between Solidarity and the government that occurred in 1991, and the workers' massive protests against the economic policies of the time have been described as follows: "This constituted the final parting of the ways for the union and advocates of reform. At the same time, there was a strengthening of populist attitudes and hostility toward the market economy." This same writer (Leslaw Maleszko) expresses agreement with a common complaint to the effect that the union is interested in nothing except "increasing wages and restricting the scope of lay-offs." Not a word about the massive growth in unemployment, the sudden drop in real wages by at least one third; not a word about the multifold increase in the number of the poor, about the widespread establishment of shady firms, corruption, and the creation of massive fortunes overnight.

Luckily, this is not the only opinion of this period. An opposite view has been voiced by Jacek Kuron. In his opinion:

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> The defeat of Solidarity occurred because government leaders, who emerged from the movement, declined to lead a mass movement in support of transformation. Instead they went over the heads of the population, implementing an etatist-technocratic program and forcing the majority of the population into left-wing demands, which were all the more radical the more painful were the costs of the collapse of communism.

Citing these words of Kuron, I am unable to refrain from commenting on the functioning of the mass media in Poland. Kuron writes regularly for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and the paper has often quoted his off-the-cuff remarks. But the paper neither published nor summarized this particular article. Indeed, Kuron's friends attacked him bitterly for the piece. It was finally published in *Zycie Gospodarcze*, a paper whose circulation is far smaller than that of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. This is the kind of subtle restriction that currently limits freedom of information in Poland.

Kuron's text has now become even more inconvenient, since all political parties—except for the ex-Communist Social Democrats and the Union of Labor—are competing for the support of Solidarity. The union is perceived as the only organization capable of standing up to the ruling coalition. The centrist Freedom Union is among those seeking its support. But it is precisely this party that has the greatest difficulties in reacquiring legitimacy in the eyes of Solidarity. What would be needed is a lengthy public debate and radical reorientation of its program. It was this that Kuron demanded, unsuccessfully, during 1994-1995. But it is too late; elections will be held in the fall of 1997, and time is pressing. The Freedom Union has instead adopted the tactic of claiming that everything done by its predecessors in power (the Democratic Union and the Congress of Liberal Democrats) was aimed at realizing the ethos of Solidarity.

For example, Father Jozef Tischner, the main speaker at a Freedom Union gala last summer devoted to "The Polish August," answered a question about the nature of the Solidarity ethic as follows, in terms not of ideas but personalities:

> Lech Walesa was the leader of a revolution that took place without bloodshed. Class struggle was replaced by the spirit of Solidarity. Tadeusz Mazowiecki brought together the spirit of Solidarity and Christian personalism in his efforts to construct the democratic institutions of a state based on the rule of law. . . . Leszek Balcerowicz forged a synthesis between Solidarity's utopia and Anglo-Saxon political economy.

I do not want to be misunderstood. Under certain assumptions, there was some basis to the assertion that Solidarity's vision of the new order was nothing short of utopian. If one assumed, for example, increasing European integration and increasing internationalization of the world economy, it could have been argued that a great leap forward into Europe was a precondition for the modernization of Poland's economy. It could also have been argued (again, I emphasize, if we adopt such assumptions) that we were condemned to undergo a form of shock therapy. One may even stand by such beliefs today. To state, however, that the Balcerowicz program was a happy synthesis of Solidarity's utopian vision and Anglo-Saxon economics, to present this program as an expression of the Solidarity ethic, is to undertake a heroic effort to eliminate inconvenient facts.

Solidarity, however, continues to treat the Freedom Union as its enemy, almost on a par with the ruling Social Democrats. In doing so, it has fallen into the embrace of the most right-wing political parties, forgetting that the origins and ideology of some of them are rooted in extreme forms of anti-unionism, that in almost all countries, trade unions find political support in parties of the left or center-left. In 1989, Solidarity extended its umbrella to the first post-communist government and paid a high price in terms of the erosion of its own strength. But the movement at least had the justification that it had not foreseen such a radical shift in attitude on the part of its former activists and advisers. Now, however, the situation is clear. Nevertheless, the union has gone so far as to form an electoral coalition of at least thirty-five parties called Solidarity Election Action, which includes political parties and programs that make even the right wing of the Freedom Union look pinkish. In the grip of this latest friendly embrace, Solidarity may find itself not just further weakened but finally suffocated.

Translated from the Polish by JANE CAVE □

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Bogdan Denitch

YUGOSLAV TREMORS: A REPORT

The Dayton accords are in trouble. Their only virtue—it is not a small one—is that they stopped the organized fighting in the former Yugoslavia. But they also partitioned Bosnia and left the consequences of "ethnic cleansing" intact. The major war criminals and their chief henchmen are unlikely to be punished. The three new "entities" in Bosnia are now unashamedly based on ethnic homogeneity, real or imagined. For that matter, Croatia itself is close to being ethnically homogeneous, with a broad consensus among Croatian parties that this is a good thing.

Dayton did achieve one aim brilliantly—keeping the lid on the former Yugoslavia until Clinton's re-election. Along the way, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, Croatia's Franjo Tudjman, and Bosnia's Alia Izetbegovic, three presidents who share different degrees of responsibility for the carnage in the region and who are all hostile to democracy, became the accepted "relevant" political players. No wonder that an election in Bosnia in which 103 percent of those eligible voted was certified.

Shaky Croatia

Tudjman's ruling party, the Croatian National Community party (HDZ), has lost election after election but has kept power illegally in the capital and most major cities without provoking excessive outrage or substantial pressure from the United States or the European Community. It did, in November, provoke the largest and broadest demonstrations since Croatia's declaration of independence, when over 160,000 people gathered to denounce the regime's refusal to renew the license of the last truly independent radio station in the country. Among the angry protestors were students, pensioners, human rights and peace activists, and even members of the "Bad Blue Boys," the hugely popular and nationalist soccer fan club. Some military units joined in, as did some of the ever cautious opposition parties. The government finally backed down.

Tudjman, who is seventy-four, recently discovered that he has cancer; whoever succeeds him may be even worse than he is. It's clear that powerful elements in the HDZ—I can only call them quasi-fascist—won't yield power in mere elections. Nor will they restrain their comrades in Herceg-Bosnia, the Croatian enclave within Bosnia, which means that a nasty conflict between Muslims and Croatians there is likely.

While the size of the demonstrations was heartening, Tudjman's hysterical reaction upon his return from the United States in November probably signals that repression is not far off. The weakness of the various opposition parties is surely encouraging to him. The HDZ has called repeatedly for a crackdown on internal enemies. It is convenient that Europe and the United States are preoccupied with the dramatic protests against Serbia's Milosevic.

Unfortunately, Croatia's opposition parties are highly susceptible to demagogic calls for national unity. Most of them have supported the forced removal of the Serbian minority from the Kraina region. None have insisted on the principle of individual guilt (as opposed to collective ethnic guilt) for war crimes. That, of course, means that Croatia's Serbs will never be treated as equal citizens. As things stand their numbers have been reduced from nearly seven hundred thousand to some two hundred thousand in four years. Those remaining face considerable discrimination. Western toleration of Tudjman's authoritarianism, combined with the lack of determined political opposition, so emboldened Zagreb that it even cracked down on the philanthropist George Soros's Open Society Foundation, indicting its top local staff. The Open Soci-

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ety Foundation has been the most important source of support for alternative media and human rights organizations in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia, spending millions on medical aid, education, and fellowships.

The record of Western governments, in the meantime, is miserable. Not only should the recent decision to admit Croatia to the European Council be reexamined, but Washington should reconsider its shameful, prolonged affair with Zagreb's ugly regime. Croatia is in fact more vulnerable to Western pressure than is Serbia.

Milosevic and His Foes

Milosevic has been blessed in a way. His opponents have allowed him to present himself as a peace candidate representing a vague "left." Some of them, hard-line nationalists, still attack Serbia's chief for "betraying" the idea of Greater Serbia by accepting Croatia's reconquest of Kraina and signing in Dayton an agreement giving Bosnian Serbs, some 32 percent of Bosnia's population, "only" 49 percent of Bosnia's territory. The regime has also been chastised for trying to negotiate a solution to Serbia's longstanding conflict with the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Leaders of *Zajedno* (Together), the major opposition coalition, congratulated Serbian nationalists on their election "victory" in Bosnia.

Milosevic won the Yugoslav federal elections last November 5 but lost most of the major cities, including Belgrade, two weeks later. As one of his henchmen said to me at the time, "The opposition may win the vote, but we will win the count." Soon afterward, massive and increasingly bitter protests began in Belgrade. Demands began to widen from certification of the municipal election results to an end to the regime altogether. Soon there were also marches in other cities.

All this is good news for democracy but bad news if you were relying on stability in Belgrade to anchor the Dayton agreements. Initially the West and its media were silent about the growing opposition to Milosevic, but by the year's end Western governments were backing the call to certify the municipal elections. International support for fair elections, though finally laudable, smacked of hypocrisy: at the same time as the United States has thundered against violations of democratic norms in Serbia it has been relatively silent about election-theft in Croatia.

In the meantime, Milosevic retains a huge police apparatus and is unlikely to go quietly into oblivion. Army leaders may be unwilling to crack down on peaceful demonstrators, but will they support the overthrow of a government whose federal election victory is as legitimate as that of the opposition in the cities? Still, the demonstrations were persistent and prolonged. Serbians are clearly no longer afraid to speak out. On the other hand the organized opposition is internally divided and mistrusted by many students and workers. Only Vesna Pesic's Civic Alliance, by far the smallest party in the *Zajedno*, defines itself as nonnationalist. The two major parties in the coalition mix nationalism with royalist Orthodox religious sympathies—all of which leaves little room for pluralist democracy. Opinion polls taken by the opposition show that roughly half the demonstrators see themselves as nationalists, and this is confirmed by the widespread use in the marches of nationalist salutes, songs, and symbols. Too many of the anti-Milosevic speeches have dwelled on the betrayal of fellow Serbians in Croatia and Bosnia, a theme repeatedly emphasized by the Orthodox church. (The Serbian Orthodox church, which threw its support to the protestors, has been a major supporter of Greater Serbian nationalism and "ethnic cleansing." Its backing was nonetheless welcomed by "democratic" and "secular" oppositionists.)

If Milosevic is overthrown, he is likely to be succeeded by a fragmented leadership that will have to navigate through a sea of nationalist demagogy. On the other hand, stormy and unpredictable democratic processes will be opened up. A new regime will find it more difficult to repress independent unions and popular pressures from below. Given the difficult economic situation in Serbia today, these pressures are inevitable. In the meantime the opposition lacks any sort of economic program besides the familiar cry for markets and privatization. In these circumstances, the few liberal democrats are unlikely to come out on top. The space is wide open for a romantic nationalist identity politics.

Still, there is a lot of political diversity among

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the demonstrators. Moreover, mass protests can politicize ever widening groups of people and teach difficult lessons. But for the time being, the opposition remains united only in opposition to Milosevic.

Bosnia's Questionable Peace

The Bosnian government is increasingly losing its secular characteristics and it has disgraced itself by encouraging a mass exodus of some seventy thousand Serbs from the Sarajevo suburbs. Step by step it has turned away from multiculturalism—once its moral calling card in contrast to Serbian and Croatian chauvinists. And like its counterparts in Belgrade and Zagreb, it cheated massively in the last elections.

Still, President Izetbegovic governs the best, or rather the least bad, of the three domains in what Washington calls the "Bosnian Federation." Certainly it has the freest non-electronic media. But while Serb and Croat nationalists now grudgingly accept their shares of Bosnia and assume that partition is a done deed, the Muslims are greatly tempted to improve their situation, even by arms if necessary. Short of that it's unlikely that they will get the loosely confederal Bosnia imagined in Dayton, or any large-scale return of refugees. War, of course, will put everything at risk once again, and their Croatian allies are quite unreliable. How Bosnia's leaders play this out will depend considerably on the economic aid they receive. Otherwise the Dayton accords will die as soon as the NATO forces withdraw, perhaps even sooner. The Europeans always opposed Washington's policy of arming the Bosnian army. Instead, they sensibly proposed *disarming* the Croatian and Serbian militaries, to create a "level playing field." The United States will now be held responsible for any Muslim military initiatives.

Two major war criminals, Milosevic and Tudjman, have been embraced by the West as "factors of stability in the region." This has been justified by pointing to the bankruptcy of the major opposition parties in Serbia and Croatia. But in the meantime the West has done little to foster real alternatives.

While the war criminals walk, the majority of Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian refugees will never be able to return to their homes. Many won't want to, since it would mean living as a minority in one of the new states. The homes of many refugees are now occupied by other desperate refugees—who, in turn, cannot return to their homes. At most we can hope for a return of Croatian refugees to Eastern Slavonia without too great a displacement of the Serbs from Croatia who now live there. Jobs and housing will then become major issues. Here the fate of the refugees links with that of the general population. The war of Yugoslav succession, launched by Milosevic in 1991 and lustily abetted by Tudjman, destroyed an integrated economy and left in its wake three barely viable states.

All three face increasingly frustrated populations who are burdened by authoritarian bureaucratic repression, the consequences of the wholesale looting of their societies, and economic immiseration. The West made a bunch of scoundrels into "our sons of bitches," betting that they could guarantee peace. It won't work. So don't bet much on U.S. disengagement within the next eighteen months. It would, after all, require a sensible policy and a credible exit strategy, neither of which are in evidence. □

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Forrest D. Colburn

DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

I recently asked a young Brazilian in Rio de Janeiro how President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was doing. "Oh, he is doing fine." A pause. "It is the rest of us who are not doing so well." This beguiling response can serve as a *leitmotiv* for how Latin Americans view their new democratic regimes. It has just been a few years since authoritarian regimes—mostly military-led—were replaced with popularly elected, civilian governments throughout the region. These new regimes have survived. Yet the great fanfare and enthusiasm that marked the transition have given way to a more sober view of governance in the region, and, indeed, to increasing cynicism and apathy. Much can be said about the state of democracy in Latin America, but here I will offer just nine ideas that help explain this cynicism and suggest what it might entail for the future of democracy in the region.

The 1980s in Latin America are dismissed as a "lost decade," in response to a continent-wide economic recession of proportions not seen since the 1930s. In some countries, real per-capita income fell by as much as 25 percent. Politically, though, the decade was anything but "lost": the predominance of authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 1970s gave way to a wave of "democratization." Celebrations greeted the emergence, in country after country, of constitutional rule, competitive party politics, and civilian supremacy. The world at large was impressed with images of long lines of poor peasants in countries like El Salvador, walking kilometers to exercise their right to vote.

The first Latin American country to restore republican institutions was Ecuador, in 1979. It was followed by its neighbor Peru in 1980, Argentina in 1983, and Uruguay in 1984. In Central America, the militaries returned to the barracks in El Salvador in 1984 and in Guatemala in 1986. In 1989, Brazil finally broke free from a military regime that had begun in 1964. Dating the transition in Bolivia and in Honduras is more difficult, but in both countries 1985 seems to have been a pivotal year. Two of the last countries to join the fashionable embracing of democracy, in 1990, were Chile and Nicaragua, countries with an experience of "socialism." Paraguay closed the cycle with its open and competitive elections in 1993. These new democracies joined the three countries where democracy is commonly said to be firmly established: Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela.

As can be expected with such a diverse group, there are many degrees of "success" with democracy. Countries that appear more successful include Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. On the other end of the continuum are Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Differing outcomes are a puzzle not easy to explain. There is no correlation between those countries that embraced democracy "early" or "late" and the initial set of outcomes of that transition. Peru, for example, was one of the first countries to return to civilian rule and its governance is most problematic. Brazil was one of the last countries to embark on democratic rule and it, too, is problematic. Similarly, there is no easy correlation between the depth of earlier political conflict and present stability. Bolivia, for example, has a history of extreme political instability—characterized by military coups d'état—yet today seems stable. Venezuela has a history of constitutional rule, but is floundering. Finally, there are no socio-economic indicators, such as per-capita income, that predict political outcomes.

Certain generalizations, however, can be made for Latin America as a whole.

1. *A number of indicators suggest that both new and old democratic regimes are under stress, that their legitimacy is being questioned, and that*

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their public support is increasingly fragile. Public opinion polls in individual countries and for the region as a whole demonstrate declining public confidence in democratic institutions, especially for legislatures and parties. In a poll conducted last year by Barómetro Latinoamericano, only a small majority of those polled expressed a preference for democracy over authoritarianism: Brazil, 50 percent; Ecuador, 52 percent; Chile, 54 percent; and Bolivia, 64 percent. Support was higher in Argentina, 71 percent, and Uruguay, 80 percent. Also suggestive is the declining voter turnout in elections. In Venezuela, for example, the abstention rate jumped from 18 percent in the 1988 election to 36 percent in 1993. In Colombia abstention has now climbed to over 50 percent. In Guatemala's elections last year, in the departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché, where the population is overwhelmingly indigenous, 74 percent of eligible voters stayed home. Another disturbing indicator is the lack of support offered to candidates of traditional political parties. In some countries, such as Peru and Venezuela, important parties have all but collapsed. Alternatively, candidates with no political party behind them, and in some cases, with no political experience, have won elections. Alberto Fujimori in Peru is the best-known case. There also appears to be an increasing tendency—accepted by the public—to concentrate power in the executive, who rules by decrees instead of by laws. Finally, many in the media and the academic community openly express doubts about the desirability of democracy. They talk of the "Pinochet model," a "democracy of low intensity," and of a "façade of democracy."

What is happening? Why the declining support for democracy so soon after "dirty wars," "*los desaparecidos*," and incompetent economic management by befuddled generals?

2. *Public dissatisfaction cannot be directly traced to the economic model of the day, the "Washington consensus" for unfettered markets.* Instead, public disenchantment is focused on corruption and ineptitude in governing. A region-wide survey of public attitudes by the Spanish magazine *Cambio 16* revealed that for the overwhelming majority the most serious problem in their countries is corruption. In impoverished Bolivia, for example, most Bolivians say that corruption is a more serious problem than unemployment. Election results also do not demonstrate public rejection of the "neoliberal" economic model. In Paraguay a wealthy businessman with a program of economic liberalization won the last election. In Bolivia the winner was the party that began the country's economic reforms. In the last Chilean election, 90 percent of the votes went to candidates who accepted the reigning economic model. The dominant attitude in the region is best captured by a Mexican intellectual who said he no longer cared about governments of the right or the left; he would settle for an *honest* government.

3. *The public has sweeping (and perhaps unfair) criteria for granting political legitimacy.* Intellectuals often separate regime type from everyday public administration. The public make no such distinction. Legitimacy is accorded to governors not on the basis of how they acquired power but of what they do with it. The abrupt transition from authoritarianism to democracy in the 1980s was not accompanied by a wholesale remaking of the bureaucracies that provide (or don't provide) all-important services to a needy public. In too many instances, the state remains inefficient and corrupt. Costa Rica has been a democracy since 1948, but a common bumper sticker suggests the challenge in Latin America for winners of elections: "Every time I hit a pothole, I think of the President."

4. *Political parties are the weakest link in Latin America's democracies.* In contemporary democracies political parties are the building blocks. They have responsibility for aggregating public preferences, formulating plans for governing, and fielding candidates. With only limited exceptions, in Latin America they are not institutionalized, they are not stable, they do not have roots in society, they are not independent of ambitious leaders, and they are not democratic in their internal organization. Since the end of military rule in Ecuador the country has had six elected presidents. All have been from different political parties. Since 1984, between fourteen and seventeen parties have competed in legislative elections, with at least ten always winning seats. Not surprisingly, the strongest party in Congress at any one time has never been able to

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represent anything close to a majority; polling between 15 and 31 percent of the vote, with the norm about 20 percent. None of the parties have deep roots in society. Indeed, even politicians have shallow roots in their own political parties. One of the features of Ecuador's politics is what is called *cambio de camiseta* (change of jersey): candidates for positions in Congress are required to run for election under a party banner, but once elected they commonly change parties, or just proclaim themselves independents. In 1994, more than a fourth of the members of Congress claimed no party affiliation. Party affiliation is shed so as to enhance the bargaining power of individual members of Congress. I asked an Ecuadorian congressman, in the privacy of his office, how much a congressional vote was worth. "If it is not a vote of great importance, something like two jobs in the customs authority."

Other countries, notably Brazil, also suffer from political fragmentation, with members of Congress changing parties at will. And even in regimes that are essentially two-party systems, such as Honduras, there are no strong connections between society and party. Electoral competition has not been sufficient to end cronyism, indifference, and corruption. Much work still needs to be done to improve the responsiveness and public accountability of Latin America's political parties.

5. *The reform of political parties is stymied by a lack of involvement on the part of many of the middle class, of the managers and professionals whose skills are sorely needed.* Throughout the region there is a common fatalism about politics, as if all outcomes are foreordained. Political parties are left to *políticos*. As a Guatemalan manager put it, "*Los buenos no se meten*" (Decent people do not get involved). This lack of political participation in the management of political parties, and in politics in general, is at odds with common ideas about the economy. Professionals understand that the economy needs constant scrutiny and calibration. A similar attitude toward politics is lacking.

6. *Political participation is retarded in part by the lack of ideas, of conflicting paradigms on how best to organize state and society.* As a member of Venezuela's Congress put it, "There is no debate because there are no alternatives." It is suggestive—and depressing, too—that no one reads anymore. Those on the left were always the most studious, the most inclined to read political theory. But now they don't read, not Marx, not Lenin, and not any substitutes. A former guerrilla in El Salvador, now a member of the political party Partido Demócrata, told me: "There is nothing to read; there are no reference points." For her and her colleagues, one learns only from the experience of governing.

7. *In the absence of ideas—and of passions—there are only interests.* These, of course, have always existed. But perhaps they are more transparent now. Latin America has always been characterized as being both more culturally homogenous and more radically inegalitarian than other parts of the world. In fact, inequality is real enough, homogeneity less so. The ethnic schism between indigenous peoples and those referred to as *ladinos* is pronounced. Indigenous populations are better organized and more independent today, especially in countries where they constitute a substantial part of the population. But arguably, there is a more pronounced—and growing—break between the capital city and the rest of the country. Latin America is the only part of the world where capitals sometimes bear the same name as the country, as if they were one and the same. Commonly, capital cities in the region are home to between a fourth and a third of the country's population. In Venezuela, there is an expression that is most revealing: "Caracas is Caracas; everything else is jungle and snakes." The economic and cultural disparity between the capital and the remainder of the country introduces an odd wrinkle into the politics of representation. In Guatemala, for example, it can be argued that the winner of the last presidential election was the candidate of Guatemala City; the loser was the candidate of the rest of the country. In other instances, regional disparities are pronounced. The wealthiest state in Mexico, Nueva León (in the north), has a per-capita income ten times that of the poorest Mexican state, Chiapas (in the south). It remains to be seen how ethnic, regional, and urban-rural divisions will play themselves out, but they do further complicate the aggregation of interests.

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8. *In the fragile democracies of Latin America the political risk is not, as in decades past, of a return to military rule.* The military realizes that the international context has changed and that the pressures on anyone seeking to usurp power would be overwhelming. In any case, the soldiers have no inclination to govern. There are no visible dangers to either the nation or their own prerogatives. Like so many others today in Latin America, ranking military officers are interested in making money. Many officers, throughout the region, have business interests on the side. And the military as an institution often owns and operates businesses, sometimes of an ominous kind, such as the cemetery run by the armed forces in Honduras.

Instead, the political danger to democracy in Latin America comes from a growing number of voters who either abstain from voting altogether or vote for antidemocratic candidates who offer "simple solutions" to complex problems. "Simple solutions" are a populist mantra. Populism in Latin America is an elastic concept, but it is most commonly associated with redistributive economic policies, usually financed in an unsustainable manner. Populism has a less well understood political dimension however: the "politics of antipolitics." Populists may come to power via democratic elections, but they govern in an authoritarian style justified by continual attacks on traditional political elites and established institutions.

Today, economic populism is not the threat it was in earlier decades. There has been considerable "economic learning" by elites, including those of the private sector and governmental bureaucracies. Also, the international financial community is always on guard. A political leader bent on pursuing populist economic policies would quickly confront opposition from a daunting coalition.

Much more likely, today, are forms of political populism *à la* Alberto Fujimori—antiparty politics. And antiparty politics is antidemocratic. Nonetheless, voters may be so frustrated with the traditional parties that they opt for exciting if dangerous leaders. Even elites, fearful of economic populism, may acquiesce in a political leadership that resolves to *govern*. But this kind of government inevitably contributes to the further weakening of democratic institutions, including political parties, legislatures, and the judiciary. Thus, the important question for Peru today is not how well or badly Fujimori has governed, but what will it be like to govern Peru after he leaves the stage.

9. *Are the democracies of Latin America hostage to economic trends and vulnerable to economic shocks?* There is statistical evidence that the percentage of poor people in Chile has declined because of robust economic growth, of an enviable 6 percent to 8 percent per year. In Costa Rica, the successful promotion of exports and the development of tourism has resulted in an unemployment rate of only 6 percent to 7 percent. In many other countries, though, the "new" economic model has brought painful dislocations, such as the surge in unemployment in Argentina. And there is scattered but persuasive evidence that economic liberalization and the development of new export commodities have exacerbated inequality. These unequal gains—or losses, as the case may be—translate into political tensions. For example, in El Salvador, the ruling party, ARENA, is threatened with fragmentation because of divisions between the agro-export elite, who founded the party but are not faring so well, and the financial-sector elite, who increasingly dominate the party. Shifts in economic policies bring sharp and sudden shifts in economic fortunes. Resilient democracies can cope, but can fragile democracies?

Another, more nettlesome question: How dependent has Latin America become on a healthy world economy, and, in particular, on capital inflows? For a number of years Latin America has had a very large capital inflow. In 1994 it took in $182 billion; in 1995 it took in $201 billion. This investment, along with healthy markets for the region's exports, has caused a spurt of economic growth and patched over many problems—including increased inequality. What happens if capital dries up or if world trade contracts? The foreign debt crisis began in 1982 when Mexico said it could not repay its $100 billion foreign debt. Today Mexico's foreign debt—of which nothing is said anymore—is $158 billion. There is an expression in financial

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circles: When the U.S. sneezes, Europe gets a cold. Perhaps the corollary is, "and Latin America gets pneumonia."

Finally, a note on the country nearest home: before the wave of democracy in Latin America, Mexico did not look so bad: the military was nowhere to be seen, there were elections, and there was a periodic change of presidents. Since the transitions elsewhere, though, Mexico looks like what Mario Vargas Llosa labeled it, "the perfect dictatorship." Its new standing is a sign of how much things have changed. Elections and a new president every six years no longer mask the fact that it is essentially a one-party state, the kingdom of the PRI. Revealingly, Luis Somoza once said he greatly admired the PRI and wished that he had one. It provides a façade of legitimacy to cronyism, clientilism, and corruption. The 1982 economic crisis in Mexico stimulated efforts at political reform, as has—again—the 1994 crisis. The PRI has responded, creating the sense that it accepts the need for reform. The public perception is that with the PRI and reform it is two steps forward, one step back. Despite all the speeches, proclamations, negotiations, legal reforms, and so on. it seems more like two steps forward, two steps back. The goal of the PRI is that "things must change so nothing changes." Mexico is not a democracy until the PRI loses an election, and there is no sign of that on the horizon. In the meantime, Mexico is probably second only to Venezuela in corruption in Latin America—and suffers from innumerable violations of human rights. But Mexican voters, cynical as they are about the PRI, are partly responsible for its hold on power. There is a fear of change, of leaping into the unknown, perhaps from the historical memory of the costs of the Mexican Revolution, which was also a succession of bloody civil wars. Seven percent of the population lost their lives and economic growth did not resume for twenty years. In any case, the PRI need not worry about problems with the "colossus to the north." As the Mexican intellectual, Jorge Castañeda, has said, there are three places in

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the world where the United States does not mention democracy: the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf, China, and Mexico.

Latin America's democracies are not in danger of collapse right now. There are many real problems, though, and not many indications that these problems are being addressed. And it is not clear how tired and cynical voters will react if further deterioration takes place or if the region is subjected to an economic shock. □

Douglas W. Payne

NICARAGUA: BOTTOMED OUT

Last October I climbed to the roof of a decrepit apartment building in Managua's eastern quarter. Originally a roost of the wealthy during the Somoza regime, it was mangled by the 1972 earthquake that leveled much of Nicaragua's capital. Today, like dozens of other concrete hulks that still litter the area, it remains occupied by squatters, refugees from civil strife and then structural adjustment, dazed beyond worry that the grimy, fractured walls might give way. These people remind one that although Nicaragua is no longer at war, and even as a handful of new Miami-style mini-malls have materialized to sell imported goods at Miami prices, most Nicaraguans are worse off than when the earthquake inaugurated a period of social upheaval whose memories still haunt Nicaraguan politics.

From atop this low-rise warren I could see the plaza by the shore of fetid Lake Managua where presidential rivals Arnoldo Alemán and Daniel Ortega had addressed their followers in separate rallies the day before, in the final moments of a polarized, fear-mongering campaign. Alemán, a populist, table-pounding machine politician who'd been jailed under the Sandinistas, cried that Ortega would bring back the conflict, press censorship, and property confiscations of the Sandinista era. Ortega countered that Alemán would be the second coming of Anastasio Somoza, the dictator overthrown by the Sandinistas in 1979.

But while the election seemed to offer a grim choice between two frightful visions of the past, a closer examination of the candidates' platforms suggested that Nicaragua's future was largely ordained before the votes had been cast. For although it was never heard on the stump, both the Sandinistas and Alemán's Liberal Alliance party said they would abide by the commitments imposed on the outgoing government of Violeta Chamorro by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This was no surprise, coming from Alemán's party—his inner circle is fond of spouting Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. But it seemed a bitter pill for Ortega, who said to a left-wing European newspaper, "We are in no condition to free ourselves from the vise of a global economy controlled by the developed world."

Which is why the Sandinistas' economic program differed little from Alemán's—reactivate the economy by luring foreign investment and increasing exports. The Sandinistas even brought in a former IMF official to draw up theirs, which emphasized the principal role of the private sector. Still, they vowed that social programs would accompany growth policies and borrowed liberally from the language of European social democracy, as befits their new status as full members of the Socialist International. How the Sandinistas would have funded such programs was another question. But Alemán won the election and is now president of the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere, after Haiti.

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Hanging over all this is the specter of an inter-oceanic canal, the Nicaraguan grail prized by great powers in the nineteenth century, an idea spawned anew in a Wal-Mart-driven world. Today, the proposal is for a "dry canal," involving the foreign-financed construction of deep-water harbors on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts connected by a rail line. It was not a campaign issue because all the parties in the national legislature had agreed months before to move forward with a feasibility study. That the Sandinistas and the Alemanistas both embraced the canal as some kind of economic rainmaker made me think of how Democratic and Republican party leaders had fallen in together behind the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the extent to which the globalized economy has made national politics beside the point. At the same time, I was struck by the irony of the anti-imperialist Sandinistas supporting such a project.

Nicaragua is a small country with a big history, and much of that history centers on great-power jousting for canal rights on Nicaraguan territory. In the 1600s the British pirate Henry Morgan pointed the way, sailing from the Caribbean up the San Juan River, which defines Nicaragua's southern border, and across giant Lake Nicaragua to sack the city of Granada, only miles from the Pacific Coast. After Spain let go of its colonies in the early 1800s, France drew up plans to construct a canal following Morgan's route, but was stymied when the British occupied Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. The United States joined the fray when Cornelius Vanderbilt bought from the Nicaraguan government a charter to use the Morgan route to avoid the dangerous overland trek to California, and Washington itself began envisioning a canal.

Competing Nicaraguan elites, locked in internecine battle since independence, realized they could use canal rights as a bargaining chip to gain foreign support. In 1855 the Liberals, after losing a war to the Conservatives, recruited American adventurer William Walker, who was backed by a group of American investors who wanted Vanderbilt's transit concession. Walker and his mercenaries overthrew the Conservatives but kept power for themselves, with Walker declaring himself president and revoking Vanderbilt's charter. When the United States recognized Walker, Vanderbilt joined the British to help fund a united Central American army that tossed Walker out.

Washington then switched its support to the Conservatives and secured canal rights in return. Digging was halted when the Liberals fought their way back into power. Washington hoped the project would move forward after the United States helped Liberal dictator José Santos Zelaya thwart renewed British penetration on the Atlantic Coast. But the reckless Zelaya, aspiring to an imperialism of his own and looking to spawn Liberal revolts throughout Central America at U.S. expense, turned and sought backing for a canal from the British and Japan. Washington switched right back to the Conservatives in hopes of unseating Zelaya. When that did not happen, an impatient Teddy Roosevelt funded an uprising in northern Colombia, which led to the creation of Panama, and the canal was built there. After the turn of the century, Washington finally sent the Marines into Nicaragua to put the Conservatives back in power and secure from them a treaty granting the United States exclusive canal rights so that no other power could build a competitor to the canal in Panama.

This so-called Bryan-Chamorro treaty became a rallying cry for maverick Liberal General Augusto César Sandino (and later the Sandinistas) in his fight to expel the U.S. Marines. But it is alleged that even Sandino, generally considered one of Nicaragua's few authentic nationalists, was not averse to playing the canal card for his own purposes. According to sources cited by Sandino chronicler Neill Macaulay, Sandino in 1928 agreed to give canal rights to Mexico and Japan in exchange for arms and recognition of his government when the United States had been driven out, but Mexico reneged.

The United States never exercised its rights under the treaty and it was abrogated in 1970. During the cold war, no other power would have dared to build a canal in what the United States considered its strategic backyard, anyway. Now, Washington hardly gives Nicaragua a second thought. But in today's geo-commercial free-for-all there are new players who prize it. The prin-

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cipal backers of the consortium formed to build the dry canal are China and private interests from Hong Kong and Japan. Increasingly, Asian countries are relying on a new class of superships, carrying up to five thousand rail-car-size containers, which are too wide for the Panama Canal, and see in Nicaragua an alternative to expensive land-shipping across the United States. China is concerned, too, that Taiwan's strong influence in Panama could become a problem when the United States turns over the canal three years from now.

Meanwhile, ordinary Nicaraguans somehow carry on, generally oblivious to the idea that the only niche their country may have in today's global economy is as a rail bridge for giant containers of Barbie dolls, Nikes, and Wonder Bras that need to get to the mall faster and cheaper. Unless, of course, Nicaraguans can learn to make these things as well as grotesquely efficient Asian sweatshops do.

Last fall Nicaragua, with a population of 4.5 million, had available about $150 million in international reserves, a few million more than Disney CEO Michael Eisner's personal "pay package" for 1996. During Violeta Chamorro's six-year term $4 billion in foreign aid poured into Nicaragua, more than half from the United States. Where did it go? Under IMF tutelage, much of it went to servicing the foreign debt that had piled up during the Somoza and Sandinista years, topping out at $10 billion in 1990. That's rule number one of the neoliberal playbook—get right with your creditors or forget about attracting foreign investment. The Chamorro government managed to cut the debt by more than a third. Yet in 1996 Nicaragua still found itself on the IMF list of twenty countries, mostly in Africa, considered to have unsustainable debt burdens. What happens to Nicaragua now that foreign aid is drying up?

The IMF and the World Bank said last year they would forgive these countries about 25 percent of their debt, but not until they control inflation, shrink budgets, and privatize. The IMF praised the Chamorro government for taming runaway inflation, which it did by slashing health and education spending and denying credits to small business, farmers, and cooperatives. Agricultural production plummeted. The foreign aid funds left after debt servicing are now increasingly used to import basic grains and foodstuffs, which are then sold at prices Nicaraguans can barely afford.

In following the rules, the Chamorro government left more than half of Nicaraguans jobless and up to another quarter underemployed. Teachers now earn $57 a month, less than domestic help. I found government officials reluctant to discuss the legal minimum wage because, Nicaraguan labor activists told me, it's not much more than the $27 a month child workers earn in Cambodian sweatshops. Last year the United Nations Development Program determined that Nicaragua is one of nineteen countries whose per capita income—about $450—is below the 1960 level.

Alemán has promised to create a hundred thousand jobs. When a reporter from a U.S. Spanish-language television station insisted Alemán specify where the jobs would come from, he replied that, well, there are the *maquiladoras*.

Yes, the foreign-owned assembly plants that thrive on tax breaks in low-tariff "free zones" provided by strapped third world governments. Nicaragua has been a late entrant in servicing global bottom feeders in search of cheap, unorganized labor. The Chamorro government established an export-processing zone near the airport, but there are just twelve plants there, employing about eleven thousand workers, a fraction of the nearly quarter-million maquiladora workers toiling in other Central American countries that got into the game much earlier.

But the Central American maquiladora industry must now contend with the renewed rush of foreign firms into Mexico. The peso collapse in 1994 caused Mexican wages to plunge; add to that Mexico's NAFTA tariff breaks and its proximity to the main U.S. market, and it may be that destitute Nicaragua, as astonishing as it may seem, still does not offer enough "comparative advantage" to compete.

I asked one of Alemán's aides about this and he said he was confident the Koreans had not lost interest in Nicaragua. He may be right. South Korean companies are true sprinters in the race to the bottom, and they are chafing at increasing

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criticism about labor rights and worker abuses in maquiladoras in other Central American countries. Even in an industry that is exploitative by nature, Korean plant managers are notorious for firing union organizers, physical abuse of workers, mandatory pregnancy tests, and violations of child-labor laws. Alemán's aide would have been pleased by an article I came across some weeks later in a publication called *Latin Trade*. Called "Weaving away in Maquilaville" (an industry jingle?), it said some firms operating in El Salvador were beginning to see Nicaragua as "a lower-cost option."

Thus far, Sandinista leaders have made little noise about the denial of labor rights in Nicaragua's free zone, to the frustration of some Sandinista unionists. Moreover, Korean timber firms were welcomed by the Chamorro government, which granted one a 150,000-acre logging concession that overlaps the ancestral lands of the Sumo Indians in the rain forest of northeast Nicaragua. It is doubtful the even more conservative Alemán government will let labor or Indian rights stand in the way of new Korean investment.

In Managua I ran into Rolando Araya, a top official of the ruling social democratic National Liberation party in Costa Rica. Being Nicaragua's southern neighbor has not been easy. Costa Rica endured a number of direct challenges by the Somoza family, who hated being next door to Latin America's most democratic country. Then came U.S. pressure to allow the *contras* the run of the country as a southern base against the Sandinistas. Araya told me he believes what is happening now may be an even greater threat. He said that at least four hundred thousand of Nicaragua's poorest are now in Costa Rica, whose population is less than four million. Their presence is putting an enormous strain on Costa Rica's economy and social services at a time when the IMF is demanding of Costa Rica ever sharper budget cuts. "Since 1948," he said, "we have had a social security system that made our democracy viable. It is now under assault by global forces. The ideological suffocation of neoliberalism is a very ominous thing."

After the election I traveled south from Managua to Masaya, a small city with a history of signaling where Nicaragua is headed next. In 1978 Monimbó, a neglected Indian enclave on the edge of town, spontaneously rose up against Somoza, its people taking on National Guard tanks and helicopters with homemade bombs and hunting rifles. The Guard prevailed but Monimbó became an inspiration, sparking the national revolt that brought the Sandinistas to power a year later. Masaya, known for its independent-thinking artisans and tradespeople, balked at Sandinista economic controls in the 1980s and voted overwhelmingly for Chamorro in 1990.

In 1996 a majority of Masayans again voted against the Sandinistas, but I found few who were celebrating Alemán's victory. In Monimbó and in Masaya's street markets the talk was mostly about day-to-day survival. Many people I spoke with either knew or had heard of someone who had gone across to Costa Rica. At artisan workshops, there were abandoned stalls—something I had not seen even during the war. A shoemaker wearing ancient eyeglasses held together with sweat-stained adhesive tape pushed aside the leather belt he was crafting and said, "You can't sell anything to people who have no money."

Later, in the shadow of the mission-style church that presides over Masaya's small central square, I met a woman who was a member of the Sandinista party and bitter over its defeat. She had studied history and economics at the University of Central America in Managua before quitting to join the Sandinista underground in the late 1970s. She now taught grade school and was active in a teachers union. As we sat on the steps of the church, she pressed her hands against her eyes, then slowly pulled them down across her cheeks. Like many Sandinista activists I met, she believed Daniel Ortega had moved too far to the center in his attempt to get elected. She said she wasn't sure what the party stood for anymore. I commented that the global economy doesn't give small third world countries much room to maneuver. She snickered and said, "Well, there's always the canal. We're for it, you know." □

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Mitchell Cohen

WHY I'M STILL "LEFT"

Should the word "left" matter any more? Identify with it nowadays and the reaction is apt to be a perplexed, crinkled nose. As if to say, "The word's in bad odor, why use it? In any event, you'll be taken for a left-over."

Frankly, "left" has never had happy associations, olfactory or otherwise, on American shores. One reason, undoubtedly, is that we, unlike most Western countries, never had a mass socialist party—sharply distinguishing itself from communism—as a normal feature of our politics. Then there was the cold war itself, in which "the left" was habitually, often maliciously, identified with Leninism or Stalinism.

It could be said that the word "left" was victim of a double intellectual mugging. The right, always quick to denounce communist mendacity, decided that on this one point—that "left" meant Soviet-style dictatorship—communist parties always spoke truthfully. The latter happily concurred, because they wanted to be arbiters of what "left" meant, precluding a pluralist left. This was not achieved—Bolshevik conduct, from early on, was censured by many leftists, leading Marxists included—but success was substantial enough.

This gave birth to a de facto and paradoxical propaganda alliance of communists and conservatives. That communists called themselves "democratic" as well as "left" never complicated things. But why take their word in one case and not in the other? Or, since tens of thousands of self-identified "leftists"—social democrats, democratic socialists, left-liberals, independent Marxists, Trotskyists, anarchists—were persecuted, imprisoned, or murdered by Leninist and Stalinist states, why not draw the obvious conclusion that these regimes were anti-left?

At issue is not simply a word. "Left," after all, has no intrinsic worth; what matters are the politics and ethos it properly evokes. But then a word's resonance also depends on its associations, its use or misuse. Once "liberal" pointed to honored features of our society; now it is the "L-word," a powerfully disqualifying epithet, comparable (well, not quite) to the S-word, socialist. So the problem is clearly not just "left" but the fact that all political words and ideas to the left of the right have run into trouble.

I want, in what follows, to look at words and values. "Modern English . . . ," as Orwell observed, "is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration." "Left" is, admittedly, a vague term, and this permits its easy abuse not only by foes but a little too often by friends. Still, my aim is not, in response to corruptions or ambiguities, to provide a canonical definition. It is probably not possible and in any event it wouldn't be very fruitful. What a future left needs is surely not codified language, much less thought, but a combination of discrimination and openness in its intellectual conversation. Its concepts should be receptive to adjectives—as in liberal socialist or democratic left. There is nothing wrong with modifiers.

It is in this spirit that I want to rearticulate and to reassert some basic left-wing values; and I'll affirm that we who have identified ourselves as "left" should still do so.[1] Not out of fidelity to a maligned term or to a site on political maps,

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but on behalf of those values. "Left" is no leftover only if those values remain vital to the idea of a decent society, to social justice.

I

I'm still "left" because I'm committed to an ethos that is democratic and humanist, equality-friendly and inclusive—not only in the political domain but in social and economic relations too. This ethos presumes that an egalitarian sensibility, not a conformist mentality (be it expressed as rigid collectivism or abstract individualism), should animate our social, economic, and political life. And it presumes that it is inequality that must be justified by its proponents or apologists.

The origins of "left" as a political term date to the French revolution, most famously when delegates with royalist, clerical, and aristocratic leanings settled to the right side of the National Assembly and those of more republican and democratic persuasion moved left. Eventually these chance spatial positions also assumed social hues, with "right" more associated with the upper classes and emigrés and "left" with most everyone else. An egalitarian reconstitution was, in fact, occurring, pressed forth by the idea of equal citizenship: the hierarchy of the old regime's three estates—Church, Nobility, Everyone Else (the Third Estate)—had been toppled, to be succeeded by a more level division of left, center, and right.

Those who, in the future, called themselves "left" usually embraced the legacy of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," but almost always with an eye to expanding its meanings and domains. If the precise sense of and the balance among the three ingredients were to be disputed often enough, they still stood together in contrast to the conservative trinity of order, hierarchy, and tradition. Later, especially for socialists, socio-economic egalitarianism gave wholeness to the emancipatory project begun in the age of democratic revolution, to the summons to human liberty signaled initially by the "Declaration of Independence" and the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen."

"Left," briefly, was a stance more than a hard concept. First it meant advocacy of political and social equality. Later it meant siding with working people and the dispossessed, especially against private economic power; and that, consequently, democracy ought to pervade socio-economic in addition to political domains of life so that, to expropriate one pithy précis, the conditions for the freedom of one would be the conditions for the freedom of all. This was—it seems to me, still is—an attractive, regulative idea. To be "left"—my sort of left, anyway—is to be committed still to a triad of liberty, equality, and solidarity; not as a slogan but as entwined imperatives, each distinct yet each in need of the others to flourish. Lest liberty be operative mostly for those who can afford it; lest equality stifle diversity or autonomy; lest solidarity be hierarchical.

Of the three French revolutionary terms, the left has been supremely identified with the second, equality. Often, leftists are caricatured as proponents of a simplistic leveling of society, a forced "equality of all outcomes." Certainly the left has had its simpletons—it hardly surpasses the right or center in this distinction—but some of its most trenchant thinkers actually argued against reducing justice to one denominator. This included Marx himself. Think about his axiom for an egalitarian community: "From each according to his abilities to each according to his needs." This proposes that different individuals contribute to and receive from a classless society different things.

What, then, moves people "left" if not "equality of outcomes"? I think it is the discovery, over and again, that it is not simply "free choice" or "fairness" or "nature" but structures of power and legacies of history, all of them human doings, that have fashioned our society—fashioned it so that the life-possibilities of a few are great and those of most people much more limited. This judgment raises questions about assumptions that, unfortunately, are too common: that "those who have, deserve"; that those who don't are culpable for their want; that such is the "natural order of things." It doesn't take a lot of historical reflection to discern that "natural order" looked quite different in other times and places, although it is almost always invoked to justify hierarchy by those on its top.

So when issues of justice arise, it becomes necessary to talk not just about "personal

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achievement" in the abstract but of how unchosen inequalities shape the lives of individuals. What is the impact of economic classes and social organization and how do structured, often dramatic, discrepancies of power affect a democratic society? Or to be blunt: why is it that corporate profits rose over 200 percent in the last decade and a half, while the United States "is slipping into a category of countries—among them Brazil, Britain and Guatemala—where economic stratification is most pronounced"? How come "the ratio of the top 20% of American incomes to the poorest 20% is now nine to one"?[2] Why does the stock market plunge 171 points when employment rates go up—in a world that awards $90 million severance to an executive ousted after fourteen months on the job?

Once these things seem to add up to more than a sum of statistical facts, once their causes and impact are not perceived as just happenstance but as somehow integral to our Western societies, then right-wing—no less neoliberal—pronouncements about "individual autonomy" and "merit" sound suspect. This has nothing to do with a foolish notion that indolence warrants the same, be it material plenty or life chances, as hard work. Respect for labor, after all, was always a cardinal left-wing virtue; it grounded a basic socialist charge against capitalism, that privileges enjoyed by its dominant strata usually rest on the work of others. No, the problem is otherwise—in the pretense that unmerited privilege and social power don't exist; in accepting that a few minutes' gamble on a stock or currency or "futures" market "merits" one person millions, while a full day of factory labor "merits" another individual the minimum wage times eight.

We are, as John Rawls among others has argued, subject to a birth lottery. Our parents are a matter of chance, not choice. Unless you can be said to have rated your progenitors, why should advantages or disabilities that attend accidents of birth be translated into social privileges? Surely, a pneumonia-afflicted six year old with lazy or limited parents doesn't rate lesser medical care than the child of assiduous or gifted souls. Unless, that is, she merits the comportment, not to mention genes, of her parents—whom she did not "freely choose." And if our afflicted child's health shouldn't depend on her parents' industriousness (or lack thereof), neither should it hinge on their affluence or social class. Similarly, no shiftless son of a rich alumnus deserves admission to an elite university, however much money Father contributes (an affirmative action that rarely provokes ire). Nor does he merit the social power that may later be conferred by inherited stocks and bonds.

In short, we don't inhabit a world of rugged individuals. As some on the left are wed to simplistic notions of egalitarianism, so it becomes obvious that many on the right embrace simplistic notions of personhood. But it is only a complex notion, one of *social* individuality, that makes sense. People don't simply fashion themselves out of themselves. Their lives as well as their talents as individuals are—or are not—brought to richness or riches through a pre-existing web of social, economic, political, and cultural relations. We make our own history, but not simply of our own will, not in conditions we select; we do so, as a nineteenth century thinker, now unpopular, once said, "under given and inherited circumstances." Those circumstances permit or impede this or that access, enable this or that education, avail of this or that financial resource, allow time to cultivate natural talents or not. We are, in other words, born into structured, unequal conditions, a world configured by unchosen social—among which I include gender and racial—inequalities. One cannot speak honestly about "equality of opportunity" without addressing—redressing—them.

If you've reached this judgment, you may also recognize that you've been deliberating in a left-wing way. It's remarkable, you note, that conservatives, so insistent on their hard-nosed grasp of the "realities of power," become slippery when considering inequalities of socioeconomic power, their reproduction and consequences. Don't interfere with the market's "freedom," they urge. Liberty will be threatened if egalitarian correctives are deployed to remedy social suffering caused by its "natural" workings.

But when has the growth of socioeconomic equality (through, say, initiating a welfare state) led to an overthrow of liberal democracy? Precisely nowhere. Threats to democracy and liberty are more likely to come from burgeoning

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inequality. In fact, while it is difficult to think of historical cases in which increasing equality led to revolt against liberty, one can recollect numerous instances of democracy subverted by privileged strata or powerful economic institutions fearful of expanding equality. Liberty is fortified when social and economic fairness, rather than the hunger of corporations and banks for profits, takes priority. And significant inequality in socioeconomic power translates into political inequalities—into the disfiguring of democracy. Democracy's vistas, therefore, need to project deeply within, to socioeconomic equity. It's an old "left-wing" point: socioeconomic questions are also political. So the tools of political democracy are properly deployed to enhance social and economic democracy.

This doesn't mean abolishing markets. Attempts to do so have not enhanced well-being anywhere. But I don't see how the dictatorship of markets does so either. True, a considerable segment of the historical left believed a command economy was a panacea for capitalism's ills. However, other left traditions—social democratic, market and guild socialist, liberal-left—did not equate socialization with nationalization. They recognized that an economy cannot be planned fully from its center, certainly if democratic decision making from below (in the workplace, for instance) is valued. They understood that trying to administer all economic life from the center is likely to result in an attempt to administer the citizenry from there too.

These other left traditions rejected as simplistic the radical opposition of planning to markets and incorporated markets into their thinking. Unlike classical liberals, however, they did not fetishize them. They recognized that markets are means, not ends or self-sufficient creators of human values, let alone a basis for natural theodicies. In any event, they recognized too that we interfere with nature in diverse ways; sometimes the results are happy, sometimes not.

What if we accept the claim that market mechanisms are "natural"? Does that mean "naturalness" should be an all-determining criterion for human action? There are "natural" events (floods, for instance) that jeopardize countless lives. Would it be "unnatural" to arrest them if we could? And since markets operate in historical and social contexts and not in "natural" vacuums—and as they are never "free" because freedom is an attribute of beings who make choices and markets are not beings—the left has claimed the moral right to intervene in the economic sphere.

Markets, then, should be subject to qualitative human requirements, to standards external to themselves—not vice versa. We need to discriminate between public goods they produce and "public bads" (I borrow from John Roemer), be they social suffering or pollution. Commodification does not define the human good. A sick person, L.T. Hobhouse remarked long ago, should be treated according to the illness, not the individual's "worth" on a labor market. That notion captures the left socioeconomic ethos neatly; also, to a considerable extent, why I'm still "left."

II

It is obvious that a left ethos doesn't much inform our society today; nor are its immediate prospects so promising. When I speak of "the left" it is, admittedly, somewhat of an imaginary entity, more hope than actuality, although a potential nucleus is real enough (in labor, civil rights, and feminist ranks).

But why not just become a "liberal" of some sort? Liberalism has, of course, had varied meanings. In the classical European formulations it was associated, albeit with divergent accents, with ideas like individualism, the market, equality before the law, and laissez-faire. On one hand it embodied an impulse to freedom against absolutist politics and economics; on the other it customarily legitimized capitalist cruelty. The left—my sort of left, anyway—conceives itself as heir to liberalism's better impulses, all while repudiating its manifest flaws. Hence it speaks of social individualism and solidarity as opposed to simple individualism; of qualitative values that should discipline the market; of creating conditions that make equality before the law equally meaningful for rich and poor; and of the myths of laissez-faire. I, for one, don't object to being called liberal when the word is used as an adjective. As I'm for democracy that is not atomized but social, I'm for a leftism that is liberal.

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It is useful to recall that while classical liberalism helped historically to point the way to modern democracy, it didn't necessarily favor it. You can support civil liberties, equality before the law, and "free" markets without sanctioning universal suffrage. In contrast, most of the left championed the vote for all in most European countries. Once achieved, universal suffrage set down roots deep in the political culture—so penetrating that the political culture was transformed and undoing political equality became, finally, unthinkable (except for fascists, and the like). By the early twentieth century most classical liberals embraced political equality firmly but, generally speaking, they wanted egalitarianism to go no further. As earlier liberals divorced legal from political equality, these liberals favored segregating political from social or economic rights. Since equality's reach was for them properly circumscribed by the ballot box, the form of political life—liberal democracy—and the content of social life were separated one from the other.

On the other hand, a social liberalism that believed in government action to ameliorate social and economic problems also emerged over the last century. This is what Americans commonly call liberalism—a legacy of programmatic ideals associated with the New Deal and Great Society. My kind of left is not so distant from this social liberalism in important ways. The latter championed a welfare state and was content with its outlines. The democratic left also supported a welfare state but wanted to go "beyond" it—beyond government-managed redistributory policies and institutions—to democratizing economic and social structures and the conditions of daily work. "Beyond" was not, perhaps, the best word, because the idea was to thicken democracy in our society, so much so that a return to greater socioeconomic inequalities would be as unthinkable as, say, a return to property qualifications for the franchise.

Of course it never went that far. It seems to me that this is one reason why, now that the welfare state is besieged, its resilience is modest. Social liberals do sanction considerable intrusion by politics (or law) into social and economic life, but they resist some of the implications. Hence Ronald Dworkin, a leading social liberal thinker, proposes that liberal equality requires political decisions to be "independent of any particular concept of the good life or what gives values to life."

But what if values promoting a bad life for considerable numbers of people are entrenched in a society, reinforcing or serving structures of unmerited, unjustifiable privilege and power? Must they not be countered by a broad ethos marking out an alternative good life? An idea of the good life—which always means a good life among individuals living together—need not legislate for all dimensions of existence; it does, however, imply an ingrained orientation to living within a community, an orientation that animates public culture and governing institutions. In fact, one can interpret the historical fate of the welfare state as an illustration of how social liberal achievements, because they tried to remain on the political level, were inherently vulnerable.

Post-World War II Western society is often described as a "class compromise." In simplest terms (I am being schematic and telescope features from different countries), this meant that capital and labor were both exhausted and conceded some of each other's priorities. Capital acquiesced to a welfare state, some measure of redistribution, and collective bargaining, while labor accepted capital's hierarchical prerogatives in the workplace and retreated from radical demands for public ownership and extensive redistribution. Class conflict became class sparring, enabling economic growth and social welfare legislation in an atmosphere of social peace. Policies tilted according to election victors, yet there was no dramatic alteration as major parties, whether left or right leaning, didn't contest the basics.

It was, one might say, a pragmatic settlement. After the sacrifices of depression and war, even the dominant strata recognized that things couldn't return entirely to antebellum patterns of hierarchical entitlement. Concurrently, labor discovered that industrial workers would not be the "universal class." Since they never had composed—and never would constitute—the vast majority in Western capitalist societies, workers needed allies in the middle strata to create a decent, or at least better, society. This, in turn, re-

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quired social coalitions, not just for the near future but in the long run. Compromises in goals, not just tactics, were unavoidable.

The more this settlement seemed to consolidate, the less did social liberals or social democrats feel a need to think beyond it (with some exceptions, notably in Sweden). This gave rise to the 1950s version of a theme that is again popular nowadays: "there is no basic difference between left and right," because ideological history (at least within the West) has ended. But two decades later the compromise crumbled as economic problems multiplied, triggered by the 1973 oil embargo. Importantly, the welfare state was besieged just as globalization and revolutions in technology and communications gained momentum, making it easier for capital to reconsider its past concessions. Changes in the political constellation elucidate the story neatly.

The politicians who were governing as difficulties proliferated were upholders of the pragmatic order, first on the center-right (for example, Heath in the United Kingdom and Nixon and Ford here) and then on the center-left (Callaghan and Carter). They represented the supposed nullification of weighty differences between left and right on socioeconomic questions. But when they proved unable to master the crisis of their compromise, they opened the way for its principled foes, the radical right exemplified by Thatcher and Reagan, to take over their parties, then governments, and to initiate war on the welfare state. This was a historical breakthrough for a conservative agenda based on the sort of harsh classical liberal ideology that had been routed half a century earlier by the Great Depression.

Success required some conservative stealth along with (social) liberal weakness in shaky times. This meant targeting taxes instead of the various social benefits most citizens wanted to conserve. As taxes paid for those benefits, the issues had to be recast—as the "culture of poverty"; or "welfare cheats" who, coincidentally, all had a common skin color; or "the 1960s," "sexual permissiveness," and "countercultural threats" to "middle-class" values. Of course, the counterculture was, by the late 1970s, mostly a thing of the past, and the middle class of what conservatives now proclaimed the "golden age"—the 1950s, not the 1920s—had actually been created by the very social liberalism they opposed (that is, it was the product of state action when markets failed to function "naturally," social welfare legislation, and strong trade unionism). With social liberals unable to conserve, repair, or advance beyond their own past achievements, and conservatives advocating classical liberalism but speaking nostalgically of an America fashioned by social liberalism, the public meanings of all political labels, together with the values associated with them, were easily muddled.

They were muddled to the advantage of the political right, which was now intellectually self-confident. (The business class invested heavily in producing an intellectual stratum in the 1970s and 1980s.) Indeed, the moral vocabulary of the welfare state lost its public hold with remarkable rapidity—liberalism became the "L-word"—even while citizens still coveted many of its programs (like Social Security and Medicare in the United States). As right-wingers once acceded to left social standards in the form of the welfare state, now Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and their admirers accept ideological bottom lines drawn by the Reagan/Thatcher era. Instead of pulling the center to the left, they chase a center that has been pulled far right by conservative dominance.

You would think that today, more than half a century after the welfare state was launched, its experience would have dislodged some earlier ideological predispositions (the myth of "rugged individualism" or simplistic notions of meritocracy, for examples). Yet they remain entrenched. This is one reason why, from a left viewpoint, social liberalism, with its disinclination to address "the good life," was too limited. Indeed, the greatest flourishing of its political philosophy—for instance, the work of Rawls and Dworkin—in this country came in the 1970s—just before liberal welfare states descended into deep crisis.

Next thing, taxes were cut to up the upper crust; corporations were given more and more freedom, with unions correspondingly weakened; domestic spending and aid to the poor were curtailed dramatically. In short, traditional (that is, pre-welfare state) economic values flourished. They helped to create a poor life for a lot of

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people. In the meantime, social liberalism barely inches on to the far left end of today's political spectrum, because the "center" is so far right.

III

Liberal democracy as a whole, and not just social liberalism, may soon find itself in hard times. This may seem a strange assertion just a few years after the conclusion of the cold war. Didn't Francis Fukuyama tell us that after 1989 liberal democracy is our unsurpassable horizon? This is what he meant when he said that history had "ended." And there were obvious implications: communism's fall meant that ideology also had ended (yet again!); consequently, closure had come to fundamental debates about Western societies; obviously, then, left and right are rendered meaningless as political categories.

Great events—like 1989—tend, quite naturally, to focus our attention. They can, however, also make us myopic. Only if one sees communism as the exclusive question of the century and beyond can one make liberal democracy a final horizon. Indeed, in this globalizing era the relation between liberal democracy and economic power is increasingly complex, with new and unsettling problems arising that have nothing to do with the late Soviet Union. It may well be that lacking a radically new perception of horizons, liberal democracy's past, very considerable achievements will be jeopardized.

Let me explain. The political horizons of liberal democracy and the nation-state have overlapped considerably. A glance at modern history shows how dependent the former was on the emergence of—more precisely, the demand for political equality within—the latter. Liberal democracies, whatever their international entanglements (political, economic, and so on) were bounded; their governments had levers to pull in order to shape domestic life. The more democratic, the more, in principle, citizens ought to have been able to see their wills take tangible form in policies. But classical liberal economics, resting on the relentless pursuit of markets and profits everywhere, conflicts with liberal democracy—if the latter means that citizens have a say in determining the basic conditions of their lives.

What happens when economic globalization, augmented and driven on by revolutions in technology and communications, increasingly deprives democratic governments of those levers? What meaning can self-government then have? According to one recent study, multinational corporations now account for 30 percent of gross global output, 70 percent of world trade, and 80 percent of international investment.[3] There is much debate about the ramifications of such figures and about globalization in general, particularly for the United States, with its large internal market. Still, this seems ominously credible: the more capital's "economic liberty" spreads internationally—the more transnational financial institutions and corporations rather than popular mandates define priorities for a country's domestic condition—the more the value of liberal democratic government may be "downsized" in the eyes of citizens.

Why? Its inability to respond meaningfully to democratic expectations and social needs. The serious question is not how to live after history's "end" but how, if liberal democratic self-sufficiency is declining, do we discipline the processes of globalization on behalf of democratic precepts and (non-market) human needs and values?

IV

The difficulties raised for liberal democracy and social liberalism by the late twentieth century are shared to a significant extent by the democratic left. I wish I could say that it has come up with persuasive responses where social liberals or just liberal democrats have not. I can't—and this indicates its real crisis today, not communism's demise (we wanted those dictatorships to fall as much as anybody, except perhaps people living under them). The predicament—how to formulate a convincing strategic program grounded in a left ethos—shouldn't be underestimated.

Neither should it be devouring. Intellectual quandaries can require a good deal of time to be sorted out. We are in a historical moment that is inhospitable to left-wing values; those of us who are still "left" must keep them above water, think aloud and hard about them. But in the end, the

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need for an ethos of intelligent egalitarianism will remain because indefensible inequalities, like those I considered earlier in this essay, are still very much with us. And if there is one thing we should have learned from our era, it is that history harbors surprises, not that it ends.

So we should have some patience with our times, though impatience with such intellectual shortcuts as "Left and right are now meaningless terms" or "We're all centrists now." They are prescriptions for a new age of intellectual conformity. We ought, instead, to present regulative ideas for a better society, and do so continuously. We need to project an America with a sense of moral commonality both deeper and differently configured than that which was proposed by liberals. Not a consummated utopia, certainly not an "end-state" enveloped by sameness, but the extension of democracy well beyond the political domain into social and economic life. So that equality in one would not be threatened by inequality in another and all citizens would actually have the means of individual liberty.

We need to speak of an America in which social goods are not simply entitlements that individuals protect for themselves but social rights grounded in mutuality, in a culture of cooperation, in a dialectic of "I" and "we." Consequently, an important linkage would have been secured in the minds of citizens— between social goods (like Social Security, education, and health care) and the idea of social citizenship. Markets, then, would be kept to their proper station and unchosen inequalities would be rendered increasingly immaterial to human relations. Not only through the redistribution of goods but by making the general conditions permitting the free development of one social individual the general conditions permitting free development of all social individuals. The regulative terms of socioeconomic, no less than political, conversation would be equality-friendly so that the ethos of a Reagan or a Milton Friedman, not to mention the priorities of transnational corporations, would produce perplexity—and crinkled noses. Their values would seem as far-fetched to most Americans as, well, as many left (not to mention liberal) values seem today.

Imagine if elections in twenty-first century America were contested not by Democrats ready to slash the poor's safety net and Republicans proposing welfare for the rich via tax cuts, but by Social Democrats advocating a classless society and Social Liberals upholding some version of the welfare state. The latter might still want to avoid disputes about the good life, but at least there would be a new context. Daily politics would concern dimensions of social citizenship, not the extension of social cruelty. Another way of saying this is: the "center"—indeed, the vistas of our society—would have moved decisively left.

I still want that movement to happen; and that is also why I am still "left." □

Notes

[1] I make no special claim to originality in these pages. Since my aim is to re-articulate left ideas, I draw on many thinkers, though a good many are not cited explicitly. For criticisms of earlier drafts of this essay, I am indebted to Robert Amdur, Mark Levinson, Brian Morton, Debra Satz, Jeff Scheuer, and Michael Walzer.

[2] *U.N. Human Development Report, 1996*, as summarized in the *International Herald Tribune*, July 16, 1996.

[3] David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 128.

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Ruy Teixeira

FINDING THE REAL CENTER

Lessons of the 1996 Elections

In 1992, Bill Clinton was elected president with 43 percent of the vote. In 1994, the Democratic congressional coalition collapsed and the Democrats were swept out of power in the House and the Senate. At that point, many said that President Clinton was a goner: he'd never be re-elected in 1996. Yet he not only *was* re-elected, he also bettered his showing over 1992, attracting 49 percent of the popular vote.

How did this remarkable swing take place? And what does it mean for the political future?

Most observers credit Clinton's victory in 1996 to his move to the "center," a move defined by his New-Democrat style emphasis on small government and family values. This stance allowed him to reach relatively affluent swing voters who delivered the election for him. Except for the first part of this claim—that he moved to the center—every other part of it is either inaccurate or radically incomplete.

Of course Clinton tried to be in the center, since winner-take-all elections, by simple mathematics, are always about reaching voters in the center. So, since he won the election, he *must* have been in the center. The question is: *where was the center*? This is where the conventional wisdom starts to fall apart.

For example, take the issue of being a New Democrat: polling data show that, during the period when Clinton built his decisive lead over Bob Dole in the polls, the percentage of the public that thought Clinton was a "new kind of Democrat" actually *decreased*, reaching the lowest levels of his presidency. Other polling data reinforce this point: in October of 1994, right before the Democrats' debacle, 44 percent of the public said Clinton's approach to issues was liberal, 42 percent said it was moderate, and 9 percent said it was conservative. In October 1996, right before his re-election, the public's assessment was not just similar but identical. Finally, another poll from later in October showed 51 percent of the public characterizing Clinton as a "tax and spend Democrat" compared to 39 percent who rejected this characterization.

The truth is that Clinton's political resurgence was based on his defense of *Old* Democrat programs, sometimes abbreviated as M2E2: Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, as well as (somewhat closer to the election) a widespread perception that the economy was improving. In contrast, New Democrat issues may have helped "inoculate" Clinton against Republican counterattacks, but were not really the drivers of his resurgence. This is shown by exit poll results identifying the economy/jobs (21 percent), Medicare and Social Security (15 percent), and education (12 percent) as the key issues that moved voters into the Clinton column (three-fifths to three-quarters of voters who said these were their most important concerns voted for Clinton). This compares very favorably to voters motivated by New Democrat-style issues, where just 40 percent of crime/drugs voters (7 percent of the electorate) and only 27 percent of budget deficit voters (12 percent of the electorate) voted for Clinton.

A post-election survey conducted by Stanley Greenberg for the Campaign for America's Future (CAF) found similar motivations among Clinton voters. Almost three-fifths (59 percent) of Clinton voters in this survey cited his support of domestic programs (education, Medicare, and the environment), compared to less than one-

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third (31 percent) who cited his support of New-Democrat-style positions (welfare reform, anti-crime measures, balanced budget, moderation).*

But perhaps the most convincing evidence for the central role of M2E2 is provided by a simple examination of the *timing* of Clinton's popularity surge in 1995. Clinton embraced the balanced budget goal in June of 1995, a period during which he was apparently following Dick Morris's policy of "triangulation," designed to distance him from the congressional Democrats and showcase his status as a New Democrat. But Clinton did not pull away from Dole in trial heats until much later in the year, when he joined with congressional Democrats in defense of Medicare and other popular programs and the Republicans made their disastrous decision to shut down the government. By December of 1995, Clinton was ten points ahead and never looked back.

All this does not mean that some New Democrat issues may not have helped Clinton hold and add on to his lead, but they did not create the basic advantage that Clinton rode to his re-election. Instead, his stalwart defense of "M2E2" should be credited. By doing so, he was able to tap public commitment to the basics of the welfare state and connect to public sentiment that the Republicans were extreme and only likely to make things worse. Combined with rapidly improving public perceptions of the economy in the months immediately prior to the election, this political stance gave him an insuperable advantage in the election campaign.

Does this mean that "values" played no role in the 1996 election? No; it means we need to think about values in politics in a new way. Instead of equating values with narrowly defined non-economic issues—like crime or welfare—we need to realize that people see values in *all* issues, including, of course, Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment. Voters believed Republicans were contravening their values in these areas, so the Democrats benefited. But without the right issues, the Democrats could have talked about "values" until they were blue in the face and it would have done them little good.

Who Joined the Clinton Coalition?

The conventional wisdom also holds that Clinton owes his re-election to success among affluent swing voters, like suburban "soccer moms." The data say otherwise.

The first point to be noted here is the class-divided nature of his increase in support. Analysis of exit poll data reveals that Clinton's increased support relative to 1992 came overwhelmingly from non-college-educated voters, particularly those with just a high school diploma (up eight percentage points) and those with some college (up seven points). In contrast, college-educated voters increased their support of Clinton by just three points. These figures suggest that increased support from non-college-educated voters accounted for about three-quarters of Clinton's overall increase in support.* And, since non-college-educated voters are predominantly of moderate income (fifteen to seventy-five thousand dollars in annual household income), perhaps the clearest way to summarize Clinton's increased support is that it came overwhelmingly from the *non-college-educated middle class*. The flip side of this is the relatively trivial role of the affluent swing voters on whom so much media and Democratic attention was lavished.

The second important point about Clinton's increased support is that it came overwhelmingly from women. As has been widely noted, Clinton's support increased by nine points among women, but by only two points among men, thereby widening the gender gap considerably in his favor.

Taken together, these two observations im-

* Another clear demonstration of the relative importance of M2E2 comes from a—distinctly under-publicized—result from a Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) post-election poll. That poll, conducted by Mark Penn, asked voters several questions on what "this election was about." The clear winner: "preserving Medicare, Medicaid, education and the environment" over such New Democrat favorites as "expanding opportunity, responsibility and working together as a community" and "ending old-style liberalism and bringing the Democratic Party into the mainstream."

* An estimate that finds general support in results from the Greenberg/CAF survey. That survey found that 78 percent of new Clinton voters (those that voted for him in 1996, but not in 1992) were non-college-educated.

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ply that *non-college-educated middle-class women* played the key role in Bill Clinton's re-election. Illustrating this, Clinton's success among women voters was driven by particularly spectacular rises among women high school graduates (up thirteen points) and women with some college (up eleven points). And this pattern holds when married women with children or working mothers with children—typical descriptions of "soccer moms"—are looked at directly: non-college-educated women from these groups were the overwhelming source of Clinton's increased support.

These findings call into question the emerging stereotype of affluent, Volvo-driving suburban mothers as the new Democratic voters. Instead, these new Democratic voters seem more likely to be driving Cavaliers, struggling to get by economically, and worrying that family financial meltdown is right around the corner.

The economic strains on these voters have been intense. Through the end of 1995, the current economic expansion had failed to lift wages for the non-college-educated in general, and non-college-educated women in particular. For example, women with some college saw their wages continue to deteriorate throughout the expansion, so that their wages at the end of 1995 were 5 percent lower than they were in 1989.

Nor do post-1989 economic trends look much brighter for non-college women when attention is shifted to overall household income, rather than wages. In fact, they look worse. For example, the median household income for high-school-graduate women was 9 percent lower at the end of 1995 than it was at the end of 1989. Similarly, the 1995 median household income of women with some college was 8 percent lower than its 1989 level. And these were the two groups that shifted most dramatically into Clinton's column in the 1996 election.

These data help bring the non-college-educated, middle-class women who re-elected Bill Clinton into sharper focus. And it is a very different, more economically stressed portrait than that painted by many media accounts. What these findings do not do, however, is explain why it was non-college-educated women, rather than their male counterparts, who shifted into Clinton's column. Indeed, given the long-term economic difficulties experienced by these women, why *did* they support the incumbent president?

For three reasons: the first is that women and men have different attitudes toward the role of government, particularly with regard to social spending—that is, spending on just the kind of programs that were centerpiece issues in the campaign. For example, women, while distrusting government as much as men do, are more appreciative of government's essential role in providing social services like health care and education. They are also more willing than men to see the government ensure job availability and a wholesome social and family environment.

Thus, since Clinton's campaign became defined so strongly by his defense of "M2E2," women had more reason than men to overlook their basic distrust of government and move into Clinton's column. And the additional definition of his campaign by small-scale government regulation proposals affecting families (the V-chip, school uniforms, extending family and medical leave, and so on) probably reinforced this differential appeal to women.

The second reason strengthens the first. *Non-college women have especially high levels of anxiety about the future.* For example, in the Greenberg/CAF survey, non-college women reported the following levels of concern about economic problems: 74 percent are very concerned about being unable to afford health care when a family member is sick; 66 percent are very concerned about not having enough money for retirement and with their children not having good job opportunities; and 61 percent are very concerned about being unable to save enough to put a child through college. These levels of concern are 14 to 24 percentage points higher than among the rest of the electorate.

The third reason for Clinton's exceptional success with non-college women is that, despite their levels of anxiety and their long-term economic difficulties, these women did experience tangible economic improvement in the period immediately prior to the election. This led to improved short-term economic perceptions,

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which, in turn, made it easier for them to support the incumbent president.

For example, the median household income of high-school-educated women went up 3 percent in the 1994-1995 period, while the income of women with some college went up 2 percent in the same period. Such improvements did not come close to erasing post-1989 income losses, but they were enough to produce a more positive attitude toward the incumbent and his stewardship of the economy. In conjunction with the concerns about preserving social spending and dealing with long-term economic anxieties, this explains, I believe, the sharp swing toward Clinton among non-college-educated women.

But it is important to stress the words "in conjunction": increased economic optimism, by itself, would do little to explain why non-college women, in particular, moved so strongly in Clinton's direction between 1992 and 1996. Non-college men, who moved only sluggishly toward Clinton (and *white* non-college men, who didn't move at all over the two elections) were much more optimistic than their female counterparts at the time of the election. So economic optimism must be combined with other factors to explain why Clinton did particularly well among non-college-educated women.

It also raises another interesting question, the dark underside of the gender gap for the Democrats: why didn't Clinton do better among men, particularly non-college men, if they were so optimistic? The answer lies in the fact that non-college men, despite their long-term economic problems, are generally unwilling to overlook their basic distrust of government and support government's role in providing social services and protection from the marketplace. This suggests it will take more than increased short-term economic optimism—just as we saw in the 1996 election—for the Democrats to make large inroads among this group. I will return to this point in the concluding section of this article.

Who Rejoined the Democrats?

What of the congressional election results? The received wisdom here attributes the failure of the congressional Democrats to retake the House to their Old Democrat approach (too little on values, too much class warfare), thereby demonstrating the superiority of a resolutely New Democrat approach. Here again a close examination of the data suggests such an interpretation is radically oversimplified in some respects and just plain wrong in others.

To begin with, the House Democrats got about 49 percent of the popular vote, about the same level as the Republicans and also about the same level as Clinton in the Presidential contest. Thus, Clinton, despite his allegedly superior New Democrat approach, did not succeed in outpolling the House Democrats.

In addition, while the Democrats did not take back the House, they did gain ten seats and increase their share of the popular vote for the House by 3 percentage points over 1994. Analysis of which voters rejoined the Democrats reveals some interesting—and important—patterns.

For example, exit poll data reveal that, contrary to the trend in the presidential vote, the gender gap actually *narrowed* modestly in the House vote. Men increased their support of congressional Democrats by four points, while women's Democratic vote went up only two points.

Exit poll data also reveal that the increase in the Democratic House vote was even more class-skewed than the increase in Clinton's support. Recall that, in 1994, the shift away from the Democrats was concentrated exclusively among the non-college-educated. The change in 1996 was almost a mirror image. The *increase* in Democratic support was also confined to the non-college-educated, especially high school graduates (up eight points) and those with some college (up nine points), while support actually *declined* among those with a college education (down four points).

Breaking down these data by gender shows that in contrast to the presidential data, House Democrats made strong gains among non-college-educated men, not just non-college-educated women. For example, Democratic support went up twelve points among men with some college and eight points among high-school-graduate men.

Thus, across the board, the House Democrats regained strength among the very groups that

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were their main problem in 1994: non-college-educated men and women with falling wages. Why did the House Democrats benefit from these economically squeezed voters in 1996, while they were hurt by these same voters in 1994?

Much of the answer lies in the same factor that benefited Clinton in 1996: the perception that the Republican plans for the budget ("M2E2") were a greater problem than the Democrats' attachment to "big government." More generally, many of the voters who, in 1994, targeted the Democrats and government as the cause of declining living standards concluded, by 1996, that the Republicans and their hostility even to useful government programs were an even greater threat to their living standards. Thus, economically stressed non-college voters swung back toward the Democrats, despite continued deep suspicion of government and continued wage erosion. This underscores the volatile nature of these voters and the variability in effect of living standards problems, which can undercut the pro-incumbent effect of economic growth (as in 1994) or reinforce it (as in 1996).

But the fact remains that, despite the gains discussed above, the Democrats did not succeed in taking back the House. Why? Part of the answer lies in what happened at the end of the campaign: the Democratic fund-raising scandal hurt Democratic congressional candidates more than Clinton. He could afford to lose a few percentage points off his support and get 49 percent of the vote; House Democrats couldn't.

Another part of the answer lies in the tremendous counterpunch of business-backed Republicans in the final stages of the campaign. As has been widely reported, business outspent labor by a factor of seven to one ($242 million to $35 million), with much of this spending helping fund the Republican surge in spending close to election day. Labor played a key role in making M2E2 the centerpiece of the 1996 campaign, and thus, as we have seen, helped re-elect Bill Clinton, but simply didn't have the financial resources to compete successfully with business. There is also some evidence that the Democratic presidential campaign was less than generous in the disposition of financial resources to congressional candidates.

House Democrats were also hurt by the increased moderation and bipartisan cooperation of House Republicans in the period leading up to the election. This included passing the welfare bill and the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance bill, as well as—particularly important from the standpoint of moderate image-making—the minimum wage bill. All this hurt the House Democrats more than the president, since it reduced their comparative advantage over House Republicans, while enhancing the stature of the president, who first stopped the Republicans from going "too far," then was able to turn around and sign popular bills into law.

This constitutes, I believe, a plausible account of why the Democrats were able to improve their showing in 1996, yet fell short of retaking the House. Less plausible is the orthodox New Democrat account, summarized in a report by Mark Penn for the Democratic Leadership Council and repeated in numerous press stories. By this account, there is one and only one reason why the Democrats failed to retake the House: they weren't as fervently "New Democratic" as Bill Clinton was. Thus, Clinton won, they lost, end of story.

All this seems a bit peculiar, because the congressional Democrats loyally promulgated the president's basic message and went so far as to adopt a "Families First" legislative agenda so strenuously moderate that only the delusional could possibly accuse it of "class warfare." Similarly, the New Democrat account, based on a Penn/DLC post-election poll, emphasizes that Clinton has higher approval ratings than congressional Democrats in areas like the balanced budget, welfare, crime, and education. But what is not emphasized is that congressional Democrats' approval ratings in these areas are still pretty darn good (balanced budget, 59 percent; welfare, 56 percent; crime, 64 percent; education, 66 percent), especially considering how low approval ratings for Congress as a whole have been.

Finally, the New Democrat account accuses congressional Democrats of being insufficiently enthusiastic about the state of the economy and too concerned with "focus[ing] relentlessly on wage stagnation and the perceived lack of good jobs" to reap benefits from voters for the expand-

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ing economy. However, no evidence is offered for this assertion and there is nothing in the DLC post-election poll (or any other poll, for that matter) that directly supports it.

In sum, the hard-to-please New Democrats do not have the open-and-shut case for New Democrat orthodoxy they think they do. Reality is more complicated and the road forward for congressional Democrats is similarly complicated.

For example, if the House Democrats' support levels had simply remained steady across *all* demographic groups between 1992 and 1996, they'd be controlling Congress quite easily today. The real problem is where their support fell in 1994 and *didn't* recover to 1992 levels. And the most important place here is *non-college-educated white men*. Support among non-college white men fell eighteen points in 1994 and, despite recovering by eight points in 1996, was still ten points below 1992 levels in that election. This contrasts with behavior among non-college white women, whose support fell by nine points in 1994, but rose by seven points in 1996, almost making it back to 1992 levels.

Thus, the House Democrats' real challenge is to increase their support among non-college-educated white men from where it is today (43 percent) to closer to what it was in 1992 (53 percent). Emphasizing their orthodox New Democrat credentials seems unlikely to do the job. After all, even President Clinton, the New-Democrat-in-Chief, got only 38 percent support among this group—five points *lower* than the supposed Democratic dinosaurs in the House!

A New Synthesis for a New Majority

So the conventional wisdom on the 1996 election is off the mark. The "center" may have won the election, but the demographics and motivations of that center are quite different from the standard picture of Volvo-driving soccer mom swing voters, whose concerns are mostly about "values" and mostly outside of the realm of economics.

Instead of trying to reach these mythical swing voters, a truly centrist strategy would concentrate on two tasks: (1) strengthening the loyalty of non-college-educated women, who are under considerable economic stress and who see government as an agent (albeit a flawed one) for dealing with their anxieties about the future; and (2) winning over a substantial segment of non-college-educated men, particularly white men, whose suspicions of government currently outweigh their desires for alleviation of economic stress and a more secure future.

By these criteria, how does current Democratic strategy, particularly as embodied in the Clinton administration's apparent second term agenda, stack up? The short answer is: very poorly. Indeed, the striking thing about the Clinton administration's approach, designed supposedly to reach the "vital center," is how very *non*-centrist most of it is.

Take the issue of free trade. After the successful push to pass NAFTA in late 1993 and the subsequent highlighting of this victory in lists of the president's accomplishments, the issue was stunningly absent from the 1996 presidential campaign. The reason for this is simple: free trade treaties in general, and NAFTA in particular, aren't popular.

In October of 1995, almost two years after the passage of NAFTA, people told *Times-Mirror* pollsters by a 55 percent to 36 percent margin that more free trade treaties like NAFTA would be likely to hurt, not help, the job situation. This almost exactly reverses the results of a March 1994 *Times-Mirror* poll where, in an initial burst of post-NAFTA optimism, 52 percent of respondents felt more free trade treaties would help the job situation, compared to 32 percent who thought such treaties would hurt. In addition, NBC/*Wall Street Journal* polls found, in both January and March of 1996, that about three-fifths of the public thought free trade agreements with other countries cost the United States more jobs than they created. The identical question produced the same result in the Greenberg/CAF post-election poll.

In light of these data, there is nothing particularly "centrist" about the administration's desire to press ahead with fast-track negotiating authority to bring Chile into NAFTA, to renew most-favored-nation status for China, and to push for China's accession to the World Trade Organization. Not unless centrist is redefined to mean the center of gravity of elite opinion, rather than the opinion of the American public.

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Another key part of the administration's second term agenda is entitlement reform. Here again the non-centrist nature of this policy focus is striking. Far-reaching entitlement reform, including benefit cuts and privatization, may set hearts aflutter inside the Beltway, but the center of the American electorate thought their 1996 votes were cast to *protect* Medicare and Social Security.

The Greenberg/CAF poll shows this quite clearly—first, in results cited earlier on what motivated voters' support decisions, second, in a series of questions about voters' priorities for the new Congress and president. In this series of questions, the highest priorities for voters were "protect[ing] Medicare and Social Security against major cuts" (59 percent saying this should be single highest or one of top few priorities) compared to only 35 percent who accorded this priority level to "reform[ing] entitlement programs by slowing down the rate of increase in spending for programs like Medicare and Social Security"—a comparatively innocuous formulation. The more forthright proposition, "reform[ing] entitlement programs by cutting back benefits for programs like Medicare and Social Security"—for this is what "slowing down the rate of increase in spending" means—garners this priority level from just 21 percent.

These findings were confirmed by an early December 1996 NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll that showed *protecting* Medicare twenty percentage points ahead of *reforming* Medicare as a top priority and protecting Social Security twenty-two points ahead of reforming Social Security.

So far, not very centrist. But there is at least one major component of the administration's second term agenda that does qualify: a balanced budget. As countless polls have shown, a balanced budget is broadly popular and, in the Greenberg/CAF poll, ranked only behind protecting Medicare and Social Security as a voter priority.

The problem with a balanced budget as a centrist policy priority, of course, is all the *non*-centrist things that have to be done to bring it about—starting with *not* protecting Medicare and Social Security. In addition, since nondefense discretionary spending will have to be cut to the bone to reach budget balance by 2002, other federal programs that reflect centrist priorities—education, the environment, job training, transportation—may face devastating cuts.

This suggests that the realities of balancing the budget will not be popular with voters, despite their support for the general idea. They will not be happy to see the cuts in Medicare—their number one priority—that follow from budget balance, nor will they react well to the inevitable deep slashes in other government programs they value: education, social services, the environnment and so on. This is not what they thought they were electing Bill Clinton to do.

And to make matters worse, non-college-educated women—the group that re-elected Bill Clinton—feel more strongly about these issues than the general public. That is, they are more opposed to free trade treaties, more protective of Medicare and Social Security, and more supportive of the spending programs that will get the axe under a balanced budget.

Thus the logic of Clinton's so-called centrist agenda will be precisely to fragment his support among the very group that produced his centrist victory of 1996: non-college-educated women. And any economic slowdown will only make things worse—not least because it will make the effects of budget balance that much more draconian.

So Clinton's "safe, centrist" strategy seems neither safe nor centrist. Under the current strategy, a swing back *against* the Democrats may be more plausible than any expansion of the Democratic center—an old minority rather than a new majority.

This is not a happy scenario and it cries out for an alternative approach. I believe such an approach is available, though it entails a significant break with current Democratic orthodoxy on a range of issues. This break may be usefully illustrated by sketching different scenarios for the three issues that loom large on the Clinton administration's second term agenda: free trade, entitlement reform, and a balanced budget.

In terms of free trade, a new approach would reject the relentless pursuit of free trade treaties and the coddling of mercantilist, antilabor nations like China, instead emphasizing fair trade, workers' rights, and the protection of American living standards. This corresponds exactly to the

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preferences of the center of the American electorate, including non-college women and non-college white men. Indeed, for the latter group, "requir[ing] that all new trade agreements protect U.S. jobs, labor rights and environmental standards" is one of their highest priorities for the new administration.

A new approach to entitlement reform would take seriously the preferences of non-college women and men for protecting Medicare and Social Security, instead of assuming those preferences can be easily manipulated by a parade of bipartisan commissions and elite experts. To begin with, of course, the questions should be disentangled, instead of being subsumed under "entitlements, problem of aging baby boomers and."

Preserving Social Security is simply not a problem on the order of funding the Medicare program. Social Security's funding problems do not even begin to obtain until the year 2029, and even these problems can probably be avoided by the relatively simple step of beginning to invest a portion of the trust fund's assets in common stocks.* There is no clear need for privatization of the program, and a centrist Democratic position would recognize this and assure the public that Social Security can and will be preserved as a program that provides a secure, predictable level of benefits.

Funding the Medicare program is a much more serious and immediate problem and has everything to do with the overall problems of health care availability and health care cost containment in the United States. Put simply, under the current system, cuts in benefits and/or increases in premiums to reduce program costs can only be followed by more of the same, due to the combined impact of health care costs and demographic trends. This presents a bleak future of a decreasingly effective and increasingly expensive program.

Rather than assuming that this is the only choice, a new approach would recognize that what the electoral center really wants is preservation—and extension—of the health care security provided by the current Medicare system. Gradually dismantling the Medicare system won't do this, of course—but comprehensive reform of the health care system could, *while at the same time providing mechanisms for the control of costs*. And comprehensive reform is just what non-college women and men want: they rank "guarantee[ing] affordable, comprehensive health care for all" as one of their top priorities for the new administration.

The balanced budget is obviously a tricky issue, but it is far from clear that the current strategic approach of Democrats, where budget balance is hailed uncritically as a policy goal and the painful realities of balance are ignored, is the only viable way to respond to the public mood. On the contrary, it simply ensures that programs popular with the center of the electorate will have to be cut severely and that the philosophical and fiscal basis for activist government will be further undermined.

A new approach would be responsive to the center's preference for a balanced budget but forthright about the costs of bringing it about. These voters need to know precisely what balancing the budget by the year 2002 really entails: it can't be done by simply eliminating "waste, fraud and abuse." It means real pain for real people, starting with themselves.

And voters need to be reminded that much of the good that government has done would not have been possible without borrowing to invest in the future—exactly what their household and their state probably do today. Indeed, the common state practice of running a separate capital budget for such investments, exempt from balance requirements, should be popularized as an option for the federal government—an option that current balanced budget plans exclude.

This alternative approach, then, would engage voters in the center in a dialogue about the harsh realities of a balanced budget under current strictures and how options like a capital budget are probably necessary to preserve programs they support and to build for the future. In the medium-to-long run, this is better than rushing headlong down a path that will ultimately alien-

* This is the position associated with former Social Security Commissioner Bob Ball. It is also the position of Ball and five others (out of thirteen) who served on the panel evaluating Social Security.

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ate these voters and undercut most other Democratic policy goals.

This sketch of alternative approaches to free trade, entitlement reform, and a balanced budget has an important theme running through it: the positive role of government in protecting and raising American living standards, from wages and jobs to health care and retirement. I believe the key to selling these approaches, which individually have considerable appeal to the non-college-educated women and men at the center of the electorate, is selling that positive role for government. Conversely, if a basically antigovernment mood remains in place, these new approaches, and the new majority that could be built on them, will likely remain out of reach.

Here, I think we need to learn to talk about the role of government in raising living standards in a language voters understand: the language of values. As I argued earlier, voters tend to look at *all* issues in terms of values, not just narrowly defined "social" issues like crime or welfare. And this definitely applies to the role of government, where voters evaluate government by their moral criteria and currently see no clear moral mission for government.

But protecting and raising American living standards *can* be a clear moral mission, a mission that would derive its force from how Americans feel about the economic changes they are experiencing. As a number of recent studies have shown, Americans increasingly see their basic values as contradicted by these changes, especially the non-college women and men at the center of the electorate. Hard work and loyalty aren't rewarded the way they used to be, while those at the top, who have lost their sense of responsibility toward those who work for them, prosper enormously. This situation strikes the average American as enormously unfair and in need of drastic change.

The government can be the agent for that change. Instead of just demanding responsible, moral behavior out of the poor and those who work for a living, Democrats can take the moral high ground by also demanding such behavior out of those who benefit from the work of others. And instead of artificially separating living standards and values, acting as if what happens in the economy and to people's livelihoods is a neutral, technological question, Democrats can make living standards a realm of values, where government has a virtuous, and essential, role to play.

This extension of values into economics represents a new synthesis of two approaches within the Democratic party: the New Democrat/DLC approach that focuses obsessively on values but confines the struggle over values to the noneconomic realm; and the liberal/populist approach that concentrates on economics and living standards, but leaves out the moral dimension of these issues. Both approaches lack something, but a synthesis of the useful parts of each would have broad appeal to the non-college women and men whose support the Democrats need. And lacking such a synthesis, current Democratic strategy seems adrift—designed to push away the very voters on whom a new majority depends. Unless we believe that Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, or their equivalents, will always be there to bring them back, the case for a new synthesis seems compelling. □

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Joshua B. Freeman

THE STRIKE WEAPON: CAN IT STILL WORK?

On February 22, 1996, two hundred Barnard College clerical workers, members of UAW Local 2110, walked off their jobs, protesting the college's insistence that they pay more for health insurance and switch health plans. Barnard, and Columbia University with which it is affiliated, have seen more than their share of strikes over the years, but most have been one- or two-day affairs. This time, events did not follow the old script. With the Barnard administration displaying a newfound toughness, for two weeks the chants of picketers disrupted business, professors held classes off campus, and sympathetic students demonstrated. On March 6, the strikers returned to work in "a gesture of good faith," but after negotiations stalled they resumed their walkout. As the strike dragged on through the spring and summer, some forty strikers drifted back to work. When school reopened in the fall, no professors relocated their classes and most students ignored the struggle. Finally, in mid-September, Barnard and its union agreed on a new contract, ending a walkout that had lasted seven months.

At first glance, the Barnard clash seems to illustrate a widely held belief that strikes no longer work. Barnard's administrators, in tune with national management trends, treated the strike as much as an opportunity as a threat, a chance to put the striking union in its place and demonstrate its ability to maintain essential operations without the usual workforce. But a closer look points to a more complex message, for in the end the Barnard strikers won most of what they wanted, retaining the health plan they preferred and agreeing to only a minimal increase in contributions to finance it.

The past two decades have been marked by a series of dramatic strike defeats, from Ronald Reagan's firing of striking air traffic controllers in 1981 to the complete rout of the copper workers who struck Phelps Dodge in 1983 to the UAW's disastrous eighteen-month strike against Caterpillar that ended in late 1995. When faced with determined employer action, especially the hiring of permanent replacement workers, even strikes by the most powerful unions have been crushed. Fewer and fewer workers want to take the risks strikes entail. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service reported only 372 work stoppages in 1996—down from a peak of 3,111 in 1977—the lowest figure since the agency began keeping records nearly a half-century ago. Large strikes have dropped even more precipitously; in 1974, 424 strikes began that involved 1,000 or more workers; in 1995, just 31. These days, when strikes do occur they tend to be more bitter and violent than those three or four decades ago, because they often are last-ditch efforts by unions to defend work conditions, jobs, or representation rights.

Over the past two centuries, work stoppages have ebbed and flowed in frequency, but the depth of the current drop, along with the increased ability of employers to weather long confrontations (Caterpillar remained profitable throughout the UAW strike), raises the question of the possible obsolescence of the strike. At stake is more than a tactic in collective bargaining, for strikes have been central to the history of unionism in the United States, and for that matter the history of the country itself.

Until recently, the United States was among the world's most strike-ridden societies. Al-

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though its strike frequency roughly paralleled the rate in European countries with strong labor movements, strikes in the United States typically involved more workers and lasted longer than those elsewhere, so that proportionate to the size of the workforce, more work days were lost to labor conflict in the United States than in virtually any other country. From 1948 to 1953, when American labor was at its peak, over half the work days lost to strikes worldwide and nearly a quarter of all strikers were in the United States.

Won or lost, strikes shaped the development of organized labor. In the 1820s and 1830s, strikes by artisans seeking to shorten their work day led to the formation of the first citywide labor federations and the Working Men's parties. The 1877 railroad strike, the first national labor protest, resulted in over a hundred deaths, terrified the propertied classes, and placed the labor question at the top of the national social and political agenda. The failure of the 1919 steel strike doomed industrial unionism for another generation, while citywide walkouts in 1934 in Toledo, Minneapolis, and San Francisco helped spark the creation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The end of World War II saw the largest strike wave in the country's history, with five million workers walking off their jobs during the year after V-J Day, ensuring labor a prominent position in the postwar political economy.

Technological changes in part account for the sharp drop in the number and efficacy of strikes since the heady post-World War II days. In 1946, fifteen thousand striking building service workers brought New York City's central business district to a virtual halt, idling a million and a half workers and causing such economic damage that after five days New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey felt compelled to negotiate a truce. A half-century later thirty thousand members of the same union struck the same area, but this time business continued as usual, albeit in dirtier offices, during the thirty days it took the union to win a new contract. One simple change accounts for much of the difference: the introduction of automatic elevators. Though not highly skilled, elevator operators occupied a strategic position in the skyscraper cities of mid-century America, able to bring them to a halt simply by withdrawing their labor. Few building service workers hold such power today.

In many industries, the introduction of highly automated processes has reduced or eliminated the ability of workers to stop core operations. Striking telephone workers, for example, discovered in the early 1970s that automated switching equipment turned their walkouts into long sieges, in which they could only hope that accumulated maintenance problems, backlogged installation orders, and political pressure might force company concessions. Changes in printing methods now make it possible for a handful of management employees to put out a daily newspaper. Whereas once typesetters held the levers of power, now delivery people—the least skilled newspaper workers—have the best shot at bringing a paper to its knees (though the current Detroit newspaper strike demonstrates that even they have at best a long shot). Not surprisingly, workers in highly automated industries like telecommunications have become increasingly reluctant to strike.

The rise of conglomerates also has made it harder to win strikes. Large, multiproduct, multiplant firms have the economic wherewithal to endure long work stoppages, even when workers succeed in shutting down production at a particular facility or of a particular product. Globalization exacerbates the problem, as companies replace production lost in one country with increased output halfway across the globe. At the time of the Caterpillar strike, for example, little more than a quarter of the company's worldwide workforce belonged to the UAW. Caterpillar also benefited from the tendency in U.S. industry, documented in the economist David Gordon's last book, *Fat and Mean*, toward an ever greater ratio of white-collar and supervisory personnel to production workers. Unionized manufacturing companies now have large cadre of nonunion employees whom they can reassign to the shop floor in strike emergencies, as Caterpillar did very effectively.

Though for the most part technical and economic restructuring have undercut the efficacy

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of strikes, countervailing tendencies exist. Just-in-time inventory accelerates the ripple effect of walkouts. A March 1996 strike of three thousand workers at two General Motors brake parts plants in Dayton, Ohio brought twenty-six assembly plants to a halt in less than three weeks, resulting in the layoff of one hundred and seventy-five thousand workers and first-quarter company profits some $900 million below expectations. The widespread impact of the strike reflected General Motors' adoption of lean inventory practices and its decision to concentrate brake part production in two plants near each other, a reversal of the preference American industry developed—following the great industrial strikes of the 1930s—for multiple sourcing and geographic dispersion. Lean, tightly-integrated inventory, production, and warehousing methods depend on labor stability. Adopted during a period of relative labor peace, and to some extent copied from Japan, where labor relations have been less volatile than in the United States, they have left certain companies vulnerable to strike action by relatively small groups of strategically placed workers, precisely the scenario that led to the initial organization of many of the unions we have in basic industry today.

As the economy shifts from manufacturing to services, relocating work often becomes more difficult, another development that potentially boosts the efficacy of strikes. It is far easier to move lingerie production than skilled nursing care or Ivy League education. During the mid- and late-1980s, more large strikes involved nonmanufacturing than manufacturing workers.

Although economic and technical changes have had a profound impact on strike action, social and political factors have been even more important. In 1946, most New York building managers did not even try to hire replacement elevator operators because they realized that the culture of solidarity that pervaded the city and its liberal polity, in which organized labor loomed large, would have made the effort futile. In the garment district, a quarter of a million workers milled about the streets, responding, without any formal order, to what one ILGWU official called "an unwritten law" about crossing picket lines. By contrast, in 1996 picket lines largely failed to stop tenants, deliverers, and even unionized construction workers from entering struck buildings, a dramatic demonstration of the diminishment of solidarity even in what generally is dubbed a union town. As a high-level staffer of one industrial union bluntly put it, "No one gives a shit anymore about crossing a picket line."

With the percentage of the workforce that belongs to a union less than half of what it had been a half-century ago (nearly 35.5 percent in 1945, 14.9 percent in 1995), proportionately far fewer people have had the experience of belonging to a union, growing up in a union household, or having friends or neighbors who are involved with organized labor than in earlier years—a major factor in the declining respect for picket lines. Solidarity needs to be taught, be it in the home, at work, or in the streets. Even as politicians right and left bemoan the decline of community, worker solidarity usually gets categorized as a form of group selfishness rather than as common sacrifice for the general good. This reaction is perhaps understandable when strikers already have better salaries and benefits than most wage earners in surrounding communities. (In 1992, for example, during the first of its two recent strikes, Caterpillar offered its workers a top wage rate equivalent to $39,000 a year. The UAW was seeking a thousand dollars a year more when the national median income for households was only $30,000.) But disregard for strikers is prevalent even when they clearly are exploited, as visible on New York's purportedly liberal Upper West Side, where this winter streams of shoppers have been ignoring the poorly paid immigrant workers picketing a well-known gourmet fish store.

The sea change in public attitudes toward strikers has made possible one of the most devastating antilabor developments of the past two decades—the widespread use of permanent replacement workers. The near universal acceptance of the very term reflects how much moral and social norms have changed, for this sanitized, seemingly technical phrase lacks the emotional charge and class consciousness associated with the once far more common appellation, scabs.

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In 1938 the Supreme Court ruled that the hiring of a new permanent work force during strikes over economic issues did not violate the NLRA, but for decades thereafter few major companies took this route, believing that, with deunionization unlikely, it would needlessly poison future workplace relations. That changed during the 1980s. Reagan's permanent replacement of thousands of air traffic controllers proved that the unthinkable could be done, though it seemed at the time like a possible special case because the workers he fired had violated a law forbidding federal employee strikes. Phelps Dodge erased any notion of exceptionality two years later when it replaced long-unionized, private-sector strikers exercising rights clearly given them by federal labor law. The company's success in not only winning the strike but also in decertifying all thirty union locals that represented the strikers inspired a host of major corporations to take the replacement worker path. In doing so Greyhound, Continental and Eastern airlines, the *Chicago Tribune*, International Paper, and Caterpillar took advantage of first the high unemployment of the early Reagan years and then the normalization of strikebreaking.

While above all else, the use of replacement workers has to be seen as a facet of the general corporate antilabor drive of the last quarter-century, consultants, academics, and politicians facilitated this counterrevolution. As Jonathan D. Rosenblum documents in *Copper Crucible*, his fine history of the 1983 copper strike, Phelps Dodge used as its playbook a pseudo-academic study entitled *Operating during Strikes*, put out by a unit of the Wharton School led by Herbert Northrup, a one-time protegé at General Electric of Lemuel R. Boulware, perhaps the most notoriously anti-union Fortune 500 executive of the 1950s. With funding from corporations and conservative thinktanks, Northrup acted as a one-man cheering squad for corporate strikebreaking, bucking up the resolve of the executives with whom he regularly met. Government officials helped, too, not only conservatives like Reagan but even labor-backed liberals like Bruce Babbitt, whose deployment of the Arizona National Guard proved critical to the Phelps Dodge triumph. Today, firms offer strikebreaking services ranging from legal advice to security guards to trained replacement workers, with none of the opprobrium or even the renown attached to their predecessors, such as the Pinkerton Agency and the Bergoff Service Bureau.

As strikebreaking successes have piled up, companies have seemed almost eager for work stoppages, for they present a path toward deunionization, once just a dream but now a practical possibility. For workers, strikes appear to have gone back in time to the earliest days of the labor movement, when "turn-outs" or "stand-outs," as they were then called, usually ended with either a quick victory for the workers or the collapse of their organizations. The days of the ritualized walkout, when companies kept paying strikers' health insurance premiums and made no effort to resume production, are long gone.

In spite of all that has happened, very few labor leaders are willing to renounce striking. Many agree with Julie Kushner, a UAW official who helped lead the Barnard strike, that it remains labor's "chief power." But a new sobriety toward striking is evident throughout the labor movement. Many unionists stress that specific circumstances—often outside of labor's control—make all the difference between winning and losing. Furthermore, a consensus is growing that to be successful, striking has to consist of more than withdrawing labor.

When companies have truly huge unionized workforces, replacement workers become impractical. General Motors and Boeing, for example, remain vulnerable to company-wide walkouts because with workforces measured in the hundreds of thousands, recruiting, training, and deploying scabs would require a mind-boggling amount of time, money, and political capital. In addition, these companies have large cadre of skilled workers who would not be easy to replace. If skill requirements are high enough, replacement workers simply cannot cut the mustard, as the professional baseball and football team owners discovered.

In addition to workforce size and skill, the degree of automation, the level of competition, the elasticity of product demand, and the political tenor of worksite communities all contribute to the likelihood of strike success or failure. So-

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phisticated union leaders—often at the regional or national level—have been encouraging local activists to analyze their circumstances carefully before embarking on walkouts, and unless chances for winning are very strong, to spurn the tactic. Strike defeats, they know all too well, have lasting effects, embittering workers against their unions, discouraging nonunionists from organizing, and emboldening employers. Rather than striking, many unions are exploring alternatives when negotiations break down, be it working without a contract, launching slowdowns, or mobilizing community support.

Even when circumstances are favorable, many unionists argue that strike victories require elaborate strategic planning. Walkouts, they contend, need to be accompanied by so-called corporate or contract campaigns aimed at public opinion, political leaders, other workers, and company boards of directors. Tactics include demonstrations at corporate meetings, proxy fights, lobbying, billboards and radio advertisements, the formation of community support groups, and mass rallies. Some unions are spurning the traditional, nominal picket line for more innovative, aggressive measures, be it civil disobedience or "picketing" repair and service workers in the field (during a 1989 strike against NYNEX, the Communications Workers put pickets outside individual manholes, scaring the dickens out of the managers and temporary replacements below).

A carefully planned campaign—along with the economic reserves to go the long haul—can sometimes lead to strike success even under unfavorable circumstances. The Barnard strikers, for example, courted the alumnae of the college, including prominent public figures, bringing growing pressure on an institution that likes to wrap itself in feminist, liberal cloth. Meanwhile, the regional UAW office provided the clerical strikers with strong financial, organizational, and political support. During the 1989 NYNEX strike, the Communications Workers helped lead popular opposition to a proposed telephone rate hike, while the aggressive stand of its picketers made the company fearful that the use of permanent replacement workers would result in widespread sabotage. In both cases, the unions snatched victory from what looked to most observers like the inexorably closing jaws of defeat.

Still, given the matrix of economic, technological, and social developments, it seems unlikely that even smarter, more flexible unionism will reverse the quarter-century decline in striking, at least in the foreseeable future. Nor is legislative relief probable. Even if the Democrats controlled Congress, it is hard to imagine passage of the AFL-CIO's proposal to make the hiring of permanent replacement workers illegal.

Unionists and their supporters need to grapple with the implications of the decline of the strike and the meaning of militancy in such changed circumstances. The ability of companies to continue operating when struck challenges the deep beliefs of many workers and sympathetic intellectuals. The left long has promoted the notion that ordinary human labor creates value; it makes the world go round. In the images that it has put forward for over a century, when labor withdraws, everything stops. For example, in *Industrial Valley*, writer Ruth McKenny described the beginning of a 1936 strike against Firestone Tire:

> The tirebuilder at the end of the line walked three steps to the master switch, and drawing a deep breath, he pulled up the heavy wooden handle. With this signal, in perfect synchronization, with the rhythm they had learned in a great mass-production industry, the tirebuilders stepped back from their machines. Instantly the noise stopped . . . . A moment ago there had been the weaving hands, the revolving wheels, the clanking belt, the moving hooks, the flashing tire tools. Now there was absolute stillness, no motion, no sound. Out of the terrifying quiet came the wondering voice of a big tirebuilder near the windows: "Jesus Christ, it's like the end of the world."

These days, labor withdraws itself and, all too often, nothing much happens: a plant keeps operating, production is shifted elsewhere, a college muddles through. The workplace—so often posited as the locus of power for the otherwise powerless—now frequently seems just another venue for demonstrating the helplessness of the meek and the omnipotence of property. Of course, many if not most workers never shared the romantic notions of their advocates, but their frustration at the growing imbalance of power at

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the workplace, and its practical consequences for their lives, is palpable.

Successful strikes demonstrate to unorganized workers the power of unionism, drawing many to it. (It is also true, however, that many workers spurn unions precisely because they fear being forced to strike.) Following successful strikes by the International Association of Machinists against Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, the union received a spurt of calls from unorganized workers seeking to join up in the cities where the aircraft makers had plants. As strikes become less common, unions need to find new means to demonstrate their ability to exert power on behalf of working people and to defend them from corporate aggression.

Ultimately, the fate of the strike lies with the broader fate of organized labor. Short of a dramatic change in national politics, akin to the coming of the New Deal, only a massive revival of the labor movement will likely change the environment sufficiently to make strikes more winnable and more common. At the same time, organized labor itself will succeed only if it stops playing by the old rules. Strikers already have learned this hard lesson. But they also have shown that with sufficient wit and determination, sometimes you can beat the odds. □

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Nelson Lichtenstein

WORK RIGHTS, INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Balancing the Scales

As we near century's end, Americans can see the entire middle third of this century, from the early 1930s to the end of the 1960s, as a unified whole. We might well call it "The Age of Social Reform," a single generation in which a powerfully intrusive state, strengthened by depression, war, cold war, and domestic social conflict, sought to transform the traditional hierarchies governing the industrial, racial, and gender order. The two most radical pieces of U.S. social legislation passed during this era—perhaps during the entire twentieth century—were the Wagner Act of 1935 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Both of these laws were passed to resolve fundamental social problems, not entirely dissimilar in their nature; and both of these laws generated a whole new layer of the federal bureaucracy, years of political and ideological conflict, and an enormous body of case law designed to tease out the meaning of these statutes. Both transformed the world of work and the values and expectations held by workers, managers, and that loose assortment of politicians, academics, and editorial writers who shape the way we think about the world.

If we take these two laws as the legislative embodiment of a set of underlying social movements, we can see much in common. The preamble of the Wagner Act declared it the policy of the United States to "protect the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid and protection." The radical social reality underpinning the assertion is that of an industrially disenfranchised, immigrant working class suddenly awake to the emancipatory vision of a pluralist and socially conscious Americanism. When local elites—factory managers, city officials, police captains—continued to suppress union organization, they were accused of undermining the law and defying presidential authority. They were now the subversives, while the workers upheld law and order.

If one looks at the newsreel footage or still photographs of that era, one sees an enormous number of American flags, symbolic of this new sense of rights-conscious Americanism. An emblematic moment came on the day in 1934 when Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins visited the unorganized steel workers of Homestead, Pennsylvania, to hear their grievances and explain to them New Deal labor policy. In a town tightly controlled by the United States Steel Corporation, the mayor abruptly cut short a Perkins speech in the city hall when union militants sought to make their voices heard. Ushered onto the street amid a crowd of angry steelworkers, Perkins resolved her dilemma when she saw an American flag flying above the local post office building: it was in the lobby of this federal institution, under a flag representing the power of the national polity, that she resumed her speech detailing, for a largely Catholic, immigrant audience, their rights under the National Recovery Administration's labor code for the steel industry.

This new sense of a rights-conscious Americanism is manifest in Thomas Bell's 1941 novel *Out of This Furnace.* Bell gives us the point of view of Dobie, a Slovak steelworker, whose understanding of an egalitarian citizenship is shaped

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by his participation in the great organizing drives of his union, the United Steelworkers of America:

> Made in the U.S.A., he thought, made in the First Ward. But it wasn't where you were born or how you spelled your name or where your father come from. It was the way you thought and felt about certain things. About freedom of speech and the equality of men and the importance of having one law—the same law—for rich and poor, for the people you liked and the people you didn't like . . . . About the uses to which wealth and power could honorably be put. . . . About human dignity, which helped man live proudly and distinguished his death from an animal's, and finally about the value to be put on human life, one's enemy's no less than one's own.[1]

Such was the ideological fruit of labor's great upsurge in the 1930s; certainly not at variance with the rhetoric of the American civil rights movement a quarter century later when Martin Luther King, Jr. used the language of the New Testament to give these same egalitarian sentiments an equally transcendent meaning.

But if the spirit of immigrant labor and that of the African-American civil rights movement shared much in common, the administrative structures designed to advance their struggles differed radically. The Wagner Act contained numerous rights and protections: prohibitions against employer-dominated unions and unfair labor practices; provisions ensuring employee free speech and representation elections. Thus Section 8 of the Wagner Act—which prohibits employers from discriminating against an employee because of union membership—protected workers by constraining traditional "employment-at-will" hiring and firing practices and, thereby, creating "job rights" by federal statute. Like the latter-day civil rights acts, the Wagner Act set up a federal agency—the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)—to administer and safeguard these rights. But the central institution designed to bring "industrial democracy" to the worksite was not the NLRB itself, but an autonomous, nongovernmental institution—the trade union—certified as a counterweight to the concentrated power of capital. The Wagner Act was a radical legislative initiative because it left as its legacy a permanent set of institutions within the very womb of private enterprise—which offered workers a voice, and sometimes a club, with which to resolve their grievances and organize themselves for economic struggle and collective political action. Industrial democracy therefore had a twofold meaning: on the one hand it meant an equality between organized labor and its employer adversary, and on the other, it established a highly political institution in which workers could debate, discuss, and determine the majoritarian sentiment of the membership.

Katherine Stone has labeled this system—and the ideology it embodies—"industrial pluralism." It was based on a simple but powerful metaphor: that collective bargaining is industrial self-government, a "microcosmic constitutional democracy, a mini-democracy in the private sphere." Management and labor are like political parties in a representative democracy—each represents its own constitutency and, as in a legislature, engages in debate, compromise and settlement.[2] Thus in 1941 the United Automobile Workers published a remarkable pamphlet for its shop stewards, "How to Win for the Union," which framed the shop floor struggle between workers and their foremen in precisely such constitutional and ideological terms:

> With the coming of the union, the foreman finds the whole world turned upside down. His small-time dictatorship has been overthrown, and he must be adjusted to a democratic system of shop government. . . .
>
> The steward's greatest difficulty will come on grievances which do not appear to be covered by the terms of the contract. . . . In such a situation the steward goes through his contract with a fine-tooth comb to find some provision which will cover this particular situation. . . . Lawyers have been able to use a Constitution written over 150 years ago to cover the complex issues of modern life. A bright steward should be able to do just about as well with his contract . . . the union's system of shop stewards and committeemen is a weapon of democracy.[3]

Looking back we know the many failures of this system: the Wagner Act granted workers one right, the right to organize. All further limits on management power, and all enhancements of labor's rights, were supposed to flow from the private battle waged between an employer and

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this organized employees, with government turning its face away. Only unions had standing with the NLRB, not individuals. If a worker was fired while in the process of organizing a union, her union could appeal to the NLRB and the courts. But if fired or denied a promotion because of gender, race, politics, and so on, there was no legal recourse.

All this imposed an enormous burden on the unions, even during their heyday in the 1940s and 1950s. In the United States, trade unions organized about 33 percent of all nonagricultural workers at their height, but the collective bargaining system never became the employment norm. A conservative Congress, a divided working class, and a judiciary infinitely sensitive to the claims of management prevented the organization of most of the South, almost all private-sector white-collar employees, and the whole world of engineers, supervisors, technicians, managers, and sales personnel: all those workers who we now think of as the great American middle class. Meanwhile, capital became ever more mobile and American workplaces increasingly transitory institutions outside the control even of the legally defined managers.

Collective bargaining alone could never resolve these difficulties; and when thrown onto the defensive, American unionists have found it all too easy to transform their organizations into the kind of job trusts that generate their own racial and gender hierarchies. The sentiments expressed in the UAW's stewards' handbook did nothing to prevent racist hate strikes against the upgrading of black workers in auto plants during World War II. In mid-century America the rise of the new industrial unions did much to transform an ethnically heterogeneous working class into a social formation whose "whiteness" provided an essential key to its sense of identity and entitlement.

Thus A. Philip Randolph, of the all-black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who had plenty of experience in dealing with racist unions on the railroads, knew that trade unions alone were neither strong enough nor reliable enough to ensure equality of employment to the millions of African-American workers pouring into the war industries at the outbreak of World War II. In 1941 he threatened a March on Washington, demanding that the Roosevelt administration ensure that black workers had equal access to the new jobs in the booming war industries. President Franklin Roosevelt was highly vexed, but he nevertheless issued Executive Order 8802, establishing a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), designed to guarantee that employers offered their workers equal treatment regardless of race, creed, or color. The wartime FEPC had little actual power, but it established a decisive precedent. Unlike the NLRB, the FEPC worked with and through individuals, taking the complaints of specific workers, investigating their grievances, and issuing directive orders.

But the FEPC idea of the 1940s and 1950s did not stand alone. Its advocates, in both the labor movement and the civil rights community, saw it as part of a larger social democratic project designed, like the Wagner Act and Social Security, to raise "the standard of living and purchasing power" of the entire working class. Strong unions, an active program of job creation, and an elaborate system of job training and recruitment linked fair employment and full employment into a unified program. Thus the great 1963 March on Washington, again spearheaded by A. Philip Randolph, called for a federal program of job creation, a higher minimum wage, and a liberalization of the labor law. It was a March for Jobs and Freedom; not unexpectedly the single most important financial contributor was a trade union, the United Automobile Workers.

But rather than a fulfillment of Randolph's social democratic vision, the 1963 March on Washington signals the moment when work rights underwent a fundamental shift. Indeed, the summer of 1963 may well be taken as the moment when the discourse of American liberalism shifted decisively out of the New Deal/laborite orbit and into a world in which the racial divide colored all politics. From the early 1960s onward the most efficacious defense of American job rights would be found not as a collective initiative, as codified in the Wagner Act and advanced by the trade unions, but as an individual claim to a worker's civil rights based on one's distinctive race, gender, or other attribute. From a legislative point of view the decisive moment came when, during the great political opening that followed the Birmingham

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demonstrations of May 1963, legislation governing fair employment practices was rolled into the 1964 civil rights law as Title VII. This is usually considered a great victory, and indeed it was. But as part of the civil rights package, "fair employment" moved out of the laborite world, in which employee rights were seen as part of the tradition guarded by the unions, the Labor Department and the old New Dealers, and into a realm in which rights were individually defined and litigated.

At first this legislative shift seemed to revitalize the union idea. The rights-conscious ideology engendered by the new civil rights movement advanced union consciousness among African-American workers and relegitimized the union movement among many whites, especially those whose collars were pink, white, and gray. For the first time in a generation the union movement began to stir in the South and among employees in public and nonprofit institutions. In the textile industry, restaurants, hospitals, and municipal service, women workers, and African-Americans in particular, provided the backbone for successful organizing campaigns. "Back in the late 1960s," remembered one union organizer, "whenever you went into one plant the first thing you looked to was how many blacks were there working. . . . And if there were forty blacks you could count on forty votes." Doris Turner, a leader of the hospital workers, came to see the linkage between civil rights and union rights: "Really and truthfully, they were one struggle, just being waged in different places."[4]

Rights consciousness spread to every corner of society. "Professional athletes challenge owners, journalists challenge editors, consumers challenge manufacturers," reported *Work in America*, an official U.S. government publication of 1973, "and young blue collar workers . . . are demanding the same rights and expressing the same values as university students." Even among those opposed or indifferent to the fate of the labor movement, such rights-consciousness proved remarkably seductive. Workplace rights encompassing the gender, sexual orientation, old age, disabilities, and parenthood of employees have put a new and expanded conception of social citizenship on the agenda. Thus the two most important pieces of "labor legislation" in the United States in recent years are the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Meanwhile, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (established under Title VII of the 1964 civil rights law), actually expanded its authority and jurisdiction during the decades in which Republican presidents held the White House.

The hiring, pay, promotion, and layoff of employees are now subject to governmental review and private litigation to an extent the union movement could hardly match, even in the heyday of the Wagner Act. A new feminist consciousness within the workplace has helped generate laws covering areas of interpersonal relations and employer-employee contact once considered exclusively private. Courts and administrative agencies therefore remain flooded with claims of those seeking redress for employer harassment, dismissal, demotion, or other injury.

But at the very moment in which this great rights-conscious revolution was being carried forward, the model of collective action embodied in the Wagner Act was reaching a dead end. Union density reached its height in the early 1950s; and despite the rise of public-employee unionism in the 1960s and early 1970s, organized labor has seen both its absolute and relative size decline for more than two decades. Today, trade unionism in the United States represents but 15 percent of all American workers; and in the private sector barely one out of ten workers carries a union card. The United States is now on the verge of a risky experiment: to become the first parliamentary democracy in modern world history without a substantial trade union movement.

The explanation for America's uniquely weak system of workplace representation arises not out of the "post-industrial" character of the computerized workplace or from the pressures generated by the boom in low-wage manufacturing abroad. All of the old industrialized nations face these problems. "Industrial democracy" has virtually disappeared within the United States because the political and administrative structures that once sustained it are now in an

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advanced state of decay. During the 1960s and 1970s—the very years in which civil rights law was being codified—Congress did nothing to liberalize labor relations law, even when the Democratic party commanded substantial majorities in both houses of the legislature. In 1965 and again in 1978, presidential efforts to ease the difficulties confronting union organizers were turned back by a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats committed to a pro-employer status quo.

And perhaps of even greater consequence, the Supreme Court's reinterpretation of the entire scope and meaning of collective bargaining did much to undercut the potency and appeal of trade unionism itself. During the very same season in which Congress passed the 1964 civil rights act, the Supreme Court—the liberal Warren Court—ruled, in the now obscure *Fibreboard* decision, that trade unions had no right to bargain over what the courts defined as issues (such as production planning, price schedules, and investment decisions) that lie "at the core of entrepreneurial control." By 1980, in *First National Maintenance Corporation*, the Supreme Court ruled that companies have no obligation to bargain over—or even to provide advance notice of—the closure of part of their operations. The court's position was that "the harm likely to be done to an employer's need to operate freely in deciding whether to shut down part of his business for purely economic reasons outweighs the incremental benefit that might be gained through the union's participation in making the decision."

Equally important, the courts turned the very idea of industrial democracy, which had once occupied the very heart of the collective bargaining process, into an exclusionary principle that exempted unionized workers from many of the statutory rights that those same courts and legislatures had begun to create or enforce. Indeed, the postwar Supreme Court elevated private arbitration under collective bargaining to such an exalted status that the judiciary has virtually reprivatized labor relations, establishing a rigid barrier between the workplace and external sources of law, thus sealing arbitration and the collective bargaining process from the rebirth of the rights-conscious constitutionalism that has been such an otherwise notable feature of post-1960s American jurisprudence. Ironically, this segregation was a product of the court's most liberal justices—William O. Douglas among them—whose impulse was to defend both collective bargaining and the autonomy of the arbitration system from conservative legislators who deployed a discourse of "rights," including a "right to work," in the interests of anti-union management.

Thus when statutory employment rights came in conflict with collectively bargained work rules, the former have been routinely "preempted" by the latter, under an expansive definition of Section 301 of the Taft-Hartley Act. The predominantly liberal court of the early postwar era kept state employment law out of the unionized workplace, but it also cut workers off from the potential benefits of the rights-conscious employment laws that were written in the years after 1964. When unions were strong and statutory employment rights undeveloped, this system worked to enhance the attractive power of organized labor, but today, when American unionism is on the defensive, we find that unorganized workers often have much greater access to a rights-conscious employment law than do workers covered by a union contract. For example, when it comes to wrongful discharge claims, unionized workers, relying upon a cumbersome and expensive system of internal arbitration, are often at a disadvantage when disputes involve drugs and drug testing, defamation by their supervisor, unlawful searches, and so on.

Another series of judicial decisions devalued union solidarity and privileged the right of workers to resign their membership in the midst of a strike and then scab on their workmates. In the 1972 *Granite State* decision, Justice Douglas argued, "When there is a lawful dissolution of a union-member relation, the union has no more control over the former member than it has over the man in the street." According to David Abraham's penetrating reading of this "right to resign" doctrine, the court subverted the legal and ethical basis of collective solidarity in favor of an "abstract and atomistic conception of our society." Union solidarity is seen only as a coercive set of legal/administrative pressures, curb-

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ing the work rights of the individual ex-unionist. To Abraham, this line of argument "thwarted the function and jettisoned virtually the entire raison d'être of labor law."[5]

The courts also ruled, in a series of decisions through the 1950s and 1960s, that huge numbers of workers—professionals, supervisors, technicians, security personnel, and so on—were, for the purposes of the labor law, not workers at all. In 1974 the Supreme Court held that the NLRB did not cover anyone who had the authority to "formulate and effectuate management policies by expressing and making operative the decisions of the employer." In other words, any employee who has the discretion to *think* on the job, to use judgment in interpreting commands—anyone whose job has not been reduced to mindless routine—is excluded from the Wagner Act framework of representation. All this was formalized in the Court's infamous *Yeshiva* decision of 1980, which ruled that faculty members at a private university were ipso facto "managers" because they operated in a collegial manner and could make effective recommendations to the administration regarding hiring, budgets, teaching load and content, and other policy matters. The *Yeshiva* decision proscribed collective bargaining in virtually any work setting not characterized by simple drudgery. Moreover, *Yeshiva* generated a Catch-22: the more workers win control and participation at work the less likely they are to be protected as workers, in which case the forms of participation might well continue, but merely as a mask for managerial control.

Finally, the Supreme Court severely restricted the right of a union or of its workers to take part in unofficial job actions or in wildcat strikes. Indeed, the courts now ruled "self-help" illegal when undertaken outside the scope of the union's grievance or arbitration procedures. A series of decisions, almost all written by the most liberal Supreme Court justices, institutionalized collective bargaining, but only under conditions that narrowly channeled the functions trade unions could perform for their members. In the 1960 *Lucas Flower* case, for example, the Supreme Court insisted that the mere presence of an arbitration clause in a collective bargaining contract meant that the union had waived its right to strike over grievances; and in the *Boys Market* decision of 1970, the high court made virtually all work stoppages illegal during the term of a contract, reviving labor injunctions of the sort that had so crippled the union movement during the nineteenth century.

One might argue that the protective functions unions once embodied are being taken over by an elaborate set of new agencies, new laws, and new advocates. If workers are protected against sexual harassment by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rather than their union shop steward, the employee's rights are protected nonetheless; and if the laws governing occupational safety and health regulate the work environment, rather than a union contract clause, the factory air will smell just as sweet.

But three problems arise in the complete substitution of a rights-based model of social regulation for one based on the collective advancement of mutual interests. The first is that of enforcement. The legal-regulatory system by itself is simply not capable of enforcing the inner life of millions of workplaces. For example, at the Imperial Foods chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina, twenty-five workers died in 1991 when their low-wage, nonunion factory burst into flames. In the wake of the fire there were many calls for more money and personnel to put teeth into enforcement of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. But no consistent regulation is really possible without hearing from the workers them-

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selves, and their voice will remain silent unless they have some institution—perhaps a union—that protects them from the consequences of speaking up. Indeed, the whole history of OSHA has shown that no army of government inspectors can ensure management compliance with safety standards without help of systematic, organized pressure at the worksite itself.

Second, the spread of employee rights has suffered through its necessary dependence upon professional, governmental expertise. No matter how well it is done, such regulation takes disputes out of the hands of those directly involved, furthers the influence of administrative professionals, sets up these experts as the target of everyone's resentment, and ends by increasing litigiousness and undermining the legitimacy of government. Taken to its logical conclusion, rights consciousness absolves individuals of the consequences of their own grievances. It leaves it to another body—a court, a panel, a government agency—to sort out the various claims and reach a just approximation of the appropriate balance. The result is a centralization of power at the top and an atomization of society at the base.

Finally, a discourse of rights is incapable of grappling with the structural crisis, both economic and social, which confronts American society. In too many cases, workers have used the new work rights that emerged out of the civil rights movement to democratize gender and racial hierarchies, only to see their real security and opportunities undermined by the dramatic transformation of their working environment over which they have had virtually no control. Thus in the 1970s women workers won a large employment discrimination settlement against AT&T, but the downsizing of the corporation in the 1980s and the failure to win substantial compensation for those most affected, has rendered their victory a pyrrhic one.

These complaints are not designed to add yet another voice to contemporary assaults upon the American welfare state and its civil rights laws. The emergence of a vibrant sense of rights consciousness—whether it be held by second-generation Slavic workers in the 1930s, by African-Americans in the 1960s, by middle-class women in the 1970s, or middle managers in the 1980s, remains crucial to the construction of a democratic polity. But collective action, institution building, and rights consciousness are not mutually exclusive, and we need quickly to redress the balance if the American system of work rights is not to disappear. The revival of a mass democratic trade union movement and its return to the workplace is essential to the success of this project. □

Notes

[1] As quoted in American Social History Project, *Who Built America? Working People & the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture & Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p. 397.

[2] Katherine Van Wezel Stone, "The Post-War Paradigm in American Labor Law," *Yale Law Journal* 90 (June 1981):1509-80; see also Nelson Lichtenstein, "Great Expectations: The Promise of Industrial Jurisprudence and its Demise, 1930-1960," in Lichtenstein and Howell Harris, *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.113-128.

[3] International Education Department, UAW-CIO, *How to Win for the Union: A Discussion for UAW Stewards and Committeemen* (Detroit, 1940), p.8.

[4] American Social History Project, *Who Built America?*, pp.586-604; Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: A History of Hospital Workers' Union, Local 1199* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p.113.

[5] David Abraham, "Individual Autonomy and Collective Empowerment in Labor Law: Union Membership Resignations and Strikebreaking in the New Economy," *New York University Law Review* 63 (December 1988), pp. 1281, 1314, 1316-1323.

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Daniel Lazare and Charles Komanoff

THEIR ENERGY POLICY —AND OURS

Despite last year's run-up in gasoline prices, the energy outlook for the United States appears positive. Adjusted for inflation, gas prices remain near their historic lows, supplies seem adequate, and while some commentators point to growing demand in India and China as evidence that the price of crude is heading upward, other developments, notably the United Nations' push to allow Iraq to resume limited oil sales, suggest the opposite. Indeed, after spurting as much as 40 percent last year, crude oil prices reversed direction in January and, by early March, had fallen back by 20 percent. Equally significant, the peculiar psychology of the seventies seems to have been broken for good. Although total geological oil resources remain finite, *known* oil reserves, as most people now recognize, are an entirely different story. Rather than just the amount of oil in the earth, they are a function of the rate of consumption, intensity of exploration, our ability to locate deposits under thousands of feet of bedrock and mantle, and our ability to bring them to the surface. The result, paradoxically, is that the more oil the world uses, the more it seems to find. Despite the gloom and doom of such neo-Malthusians as Lester Brown and the Worldwatch Institute, this is why the problem bedeviling the energy markets since the early eighties has not been one of long-term shortage but of persistent oversupply.

Indeed, things are going so swimmingly that even Congress can't screw them up. Last year's bipartisan effort to repeal a 4.3-cent-a-gallon gasoline-tax surcharge adopted just two years earlier was a classic case of election-year pandering. Although it sent the worst message possible about conservation, we can take comfort in the fact that a tax cut that saves a typical motorist $7 on a cross-country trip is not going to affect energy consumption much one way or the other.

So the standard view is that things are going pretty well, which just goes to show how impoverished the conventional wisdom can be. Although you wouldn't know it from Washington or acclaimed energy experts like Daniel Yergin, America is indeed gripped by an energy crisis, one every bit as severe as that of the seventies. The problem this time around is not the price of energy to the individual user, which is indeed at a historic low, but the *cost* of energy consumption to society as a whole, which is shooting through the roof. Rather than Mideast oil potentates, the villain is a heavily subsidized consumer sector whose energy appetite is apparently insatiable. Like Argentines when it comes to the price of beef, Americans have come to look upon cheap gas as something of a national birthright. Indeed, even with last spring's short-lived uptick to around $1.50 a gallon, Americans were still paying two-thirds *less* than motorists in Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia. Although Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, and Newt Gingrich were all shocked, *shocked*, at how gas prices had risen, the real story was how far they had fallen behind those of comparable countries.

Unreality Index

U.S. policy is not just silly and provincial, but profoundly destructive. The spread between the price of energy and its true cost to the individual, the environment, and society as a whole serves as a kind of index of unreality. Nowhere is it zero,

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but in those countries where it is relatively low—Denmark is perhaps the best example here—citizens are not far off the mark in believing that they are paying the full freight when it comes to energy consumption. Rather than relying on governmental directives or environmentalist dogma, they can tell from their own pocketbook whether it is more efficient on any given occasion to walk or drive, build a house in the city or off a highway somewhere in the country, and so on.

By the same token, in those countries in which the unreality index is high—and nowhere in the industrialized world is it higher than in the United States—consumers are lost in an economic funhouse in which virtually everything their pocketbook tells them is wrong. Rather than walking or cycling to a nearby store to pick up a quart of milk, it tells them that it is more efficient to drive several miles to some hangar-like supermarket off a crowded commercial strip. It tells them that sidewalks are a luxury because no one walks anymore and that bike paths are for nature lovers and fitness buffs. It tells drivers that they are being taxed to subsidize mass transit, when in fact American motorists are beneficiaries of the greatest free ride since Cleopatra invited Marc Antony to spend the night on her barge.

In recent years, a cottage industry has sprung up among green-minded economists dedicated to exploring the dimensions of this price-cost differential, particularly in the transportation sector. The numbers they've come up with are remarkable. In 1992, a study by the World Resources Institute looked at such factors as infrastructure subsidies, unreimbursed highway services, and environmental damage and concluded that over-reliance on the automobile was costing U.S. society somewhere on the order of $400 billion a year. A study by one of the co-authors of this article, in collaboration with Brian Ketcham, a Brooklyn-based engineer, estimated the total annual price tag at $730 billion, while another study by the Natural Resources Defense Council came up with a range of $378 to $629 billion.

In perhaps the most painstaking analysis to date, Mark A. Delucchi, a researcher at the University of California at Davis, has identified up to $892 billion in unreimbursed auto-related costs per year for such things as congestion-induced delays, medical costs for uninsured accident victims, air and noise pollution, and global warming, plus as much as $518 billion more for highway infrastructure, highway services, and publicly mandated free parking, costs borne at least partially by the public at large. Considering that Americans consume 140 billion gallons of highway fuel a year, this means that motorists, truckers, and so on are operating at a deficit of anywhere from $4.50 to as high as $10 a gallon. Rather than $1.50, the real cost of driving is anywhere from $6 a gallon to $12.

All of which is simply to say that America, with its lavish highway system and endless parking lots, has gone to staggering lengths to promote and accommodate the automobile. Rather than consuming up to twice as much energy per capita as the French or Germans because they want to, Americans do so, in effect, because they are paid to. They live in a perverse economic system in which motorists receive up to 62 cents in government benefits or abatements for each of the 2.3 trillion highway miles they rack up per year. Consumption, as a result, is rewarded, while conservation is penalized.

The consequences of such a policy go beyond the merely economic. Subsidizing motor vehicles means not only subsidizing congestion, pollution, highway accidents, and so forth, but subsidizing an entire Fordist social vision built around the private car. The sum of all such auto-related costs or "externalities," not to mention various homeowner tax subsidies, is an index of how much U.S. society pays each year to ensure that the bulk of its population lives in detached, single-family homes, shops at malls, and gives the cities a wide berth. If this network of subsidies did not exist, we can reasonably assume that U.S. society would be a very different place than it is today—that the bulk of the population would live in big cities and small towns, that Americans would rely far more on mass transit, bicycles, and ordinary foot-power, and that the automobile would remain a first-class mode of travel available only at first-class prices.

With approximately two hundred million motor vehicles in this country, better than one

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per adult, the auto is an all-important instrument of a social order based on orchestrated consumption and the de-urbanization and atomization of the working class. Walter Russell Mead, writing recently in the *World Policy Journal*, was hardly the first person to observe that a transportation system is not just a means of moving about goods and people, but a basis for organizing society. Where the rail-and-coal system of the Victorians gave us the industrial metropolis, the urban proletariat, and an ethic based on the overriding importance of capital accumulation, the car-and-petrol system developed in the twentieth-century United States has given us the suburban middle class, the artificial separation of production and consumption, and the latter's elevation to a kind of *raison d'être*. Where an element of lonely individualism has long been central to a certain vision of American life, the new system has institutionalized it and carried it to extraordinary lengths. Through massive highway construction, tax incentives for suburban homeownership, and the like, it used Hamiltonian means to create a kind of mass-produced Jeffersonian social order.

Expressway Forever

As American capitalism continues to hemorrhage money and wealth in this manner, its chances of surviving as a first world economy grow ever more dim. So long as the gap between the price of energy and its cost remains undiminished, we can expect further infrastructure decay, mounting pollution, accelerated global warming, and of course traffic, traffic, traffic. (To paraphrase George Orwell, if you want a picture of the future, imagine the Long Island Expressway at the start of the Fourth of July weekend—forever.) Subsidized energy inefficiency retards technological development and inhibits the flow of goods, which is why the industrial consequences are not likely to be pretty either. For inner-city residents, the upshot is likely to be even greater economic marginalization and all the social afflictions that go with it. For working families out in the 'burbs, the prospects are somewhat brighter, but not much. As long as each working adult can afford a set of wheels (an increasingly expensive proposition these days with new-car prices averaging $18,000), they'll at least have a degree of entree into the economy. But as congestion mounts, those caught up in an increasingly hostile, highway-bound environment will feel more isolated, more cut off. The very idea of community as something in which people can meet face to face in a public space without a windshield to mediate will recede ever farther in the distance.

This assumes, however, that working people quietly acquiesce. Assuming they don't—assuming that the destruction of culture and society does not ultimately go unchallenged—neither the Democrats nor, needless to say, the Republicans will be equal to the task of leading Americans out of the consumer wilderness. The Democratic party is inextricably wedded to a *faux*-pastoral social vision revolving around the private home and private car. The party's automatic response to any and all social problems—even by big-city Democrats who, one might think, would know better—is not to rethink this "American dream," but to try ever harder to extend it to all. If the Democratic party thought things through, it would realize that compact, walkable, pre-auto urban centers are in fact islands of efficiency in an economy otherwise given over to consumption and waste. But, then, the Democratic party is incapable of thinking anything through or, for that matter, of doing anything other than falling back on an increasingly shopworn set of political clichés.

Are environmentalists capable of providing leadership? We think not, despite occasionally hopeful signs. Most greens are too Malthusian, too anti-urban, to recognize that re-urbanization and a conversion from private-cost to social-cost energy accounting represent a potential way out. "Soft-path" guru Amory Lovins, for example, is a leading environmentalist obsessed with the goal of a low-emission, ultra-high-mileage "supercar" as the solution to America's transportation miseries. In fact, by Lovins's own admission (see his and L. Hunter Lovins's article, for example, in the January 1995 *Atlantic* on "Reinventing the Wheel") such a vehicle will do nothing to alleviate problems like chronic traffic congestion, social isolation, and urban disintegration—and indeed, by diminishing costs for the motorist, could make them

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worse. The rest of the "progressive" ideological swirl is not much help either, what with populists blaming Big Oil for price hikes and feminists defending working moms' need for cheap private transport. All reflect to varying degrees the blinkered, fragmented view of a fragmented society. Only socialists are capable of an integrated social vision in which the urge for a cleaner environment, a strengthened sense of community, and technological progress are combined with the desire for equality, democracy, and genuine economic growth (as opposed to the phony kind in which social and environmental costs are systematically downplayed or ignored).

This, of course, raises a number of problems. Ultimately, the only solution to the problem of mammoth energy externalities is to "internalize" them by requiring consumers to bear the full cost. This could mean hiking gas prices to upward of $12 a gallon or, what would probably be more efficient, taxing vehicles not only according to how much fuel they consume, but according to how much they weigh, how many miles they travel per year, how much pollution they emit, and so forth. Regardless of the details, however, there is no doubt that this would mean an abrupt departure from decades, if not centuries, of American policy in which access to cheap resources has been seen as a basic social right to be guaranteed by government.

This would not be popular, to say the least. But serious politics are never popular. Rather, they are predicated on the belief that people can be appealed to rationally in support of measures that are unpleasant in the short run but ultimately constructive.

Internalizing the cost of energy, of course, raises grave issues of social justice. Consumption taxes, which is what internalization would mean, strike hardest at working people who save little, invest less, and are forced into debt to put food on the table and provide shoes for the kids. A worker who is barely able to keep the family car in running order will blanch at the prospect of having to spend hundreds of dollars a month for the privilege of driving to a job that barely pays a living wage as it is.

Yet it is for precisely this reason that workers are the only ones with the moral authority to institute such a policy. Rather than abandoning internalization, socialists have a responsibility to come up with a detailed blueprint as to how it might be implemented. Working people will not support internalization if the only consequence is to leave them trudging in the dirt while the rich fly by on horseback. But if they can be shown how such policies can be used to rebuild shattered communities, to promote technological development and genuine economic growth, and to create a society that is more efficient, attractive, humane, and equitable for the people who create the wealth in the first place—then the foundation for a historic transformation can be laid. □

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Todd Gitlin

THE ANTI-POLITICAL POPULISM OF CULTURAL STUDIES

The academic tendency called cultural studies fiercely disbelieves that there are any unmoved movers at work in history. So proponents of cultural studies should not be taken aback by the view that cultural studies itself can be analyzed as an object of cultural study.

Stanley Aronowitz has observed, more or less accurately (leave aside the question of scale), that "cultural studies is a social movement." There is something more going on in cultural studies than the pursuit of tenure. In North America, there has been tremendous growth over the last fifteen years in the number of people who identify with cultural studies, claim to be doing it, establish programs of it, recruit for it, debate purposes and methodologies in it. There is energy at work. There is conviction, élan, passion. Clearly, cultural studies answers to passions and hopes imported into its precincts from outside. Cultural studies responds to the energies of social and cultural movements—and their eclipse.

In part, the ascendancy of cultural studies derives from the growth of its object of attention—the boom in the scale of popular culture, and its significance in the lives of Western societies from the 1960s on. Measure this in units of time devoted, the emotional loyalty of the audiences, or the volume of money at stake, and the significance is plain. It is not simply that the market in popular culture grew enormously after World War II, but that from the 1960s on, the young have come to define themselves by their taste, especially in popular music. They relate not only to the music but *through* the music to a sense of cultural membership. In part, too, the bulking up of popular culture and the connected phenomenon of celebrity stem from the declining grip of the institutions that traditionally imparted identity to the young: occupation, class, religion. The weight of popular culture has grown outside the world of youth as well. One need not endorse the misleading slogan that we live in an "information society" to recognize that electronics and telecommunications are central to the wealthy economies; entertainment is America's second most remunerative export, after aerospace.

Loved by its partisans, loathed by its enemies, popular culture in the 1960s became a touchstone for controversy and political debate. In the United States, and then elsewhere, issues of the legitimacy of various ways of life—questions of sexuality, abortion, drugs, multiculturalism—came to loom large in political discourse. "Culture wars" became routine, if not in the population at large, at least among elites.

The academy's intellectual style in the 1970s was conducive to an interest in the new cultural tendencies. History was being written "from the bottom up." There was an upsurge in social history, especially in the study of historically subordinated populations—women, African-Americans, workers, the colonized. Anthropologists were bringing ethnographic methods to bear on cultural life in the "home countries." Insurgent sociologists were turning away from the dismissive "collective behavior" diagnosis of social movements as, in effect, neurotic symptoms, and taking seriously the professed intentions of activists. The early cultural studies group at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies employed methods from all three fields to investigate the social history of the present—of working-class and dissident youth populations, television personages, and viewers. Cul-

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tural activity was, for all these researchers, *activity*—not the absence of something (civilization, literature, politics) but the presence of a form of engagement in the here and now. To these projects in the social sciences were added, crucially, the postmodernist turn in philosophy and "theory"—the rejection of hierarchies of value; the devaluation of "center" in favor of "periphery"; the emphasis on the active production (or "construction") of meaning; the search for "local knowledges" as opposed to universal truth; the insistence on self-challenging reflexivity.

But the tenor of cultural studies was set by the political circumstances of the first waves of cultural students, if I may call them that. The founding generation were deeply involved with the British New Left. Two of their influential elders, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, derived from the industrial working classes, and so did many of their students. Others came from the once colonized periphery, and/or were women and/or gays and lesbians. They were frequently the first members of their families to attend university. Designated meritocratically for the replenishment of ruling classes and elite institutions, they encountered condescension alongside encouragement. Especially in Britain, they encountered programs in literary studies that had little place for the culture these students—let alone their families—actually lived. They did not see why they should have to check their form of life at the gates. By the late 1960s, they were imbibing a youth culture itself filled with crossover high-cultural masterworks of modernism—the Beatles with their puns, sitars, and echoes of Stockhausen; Bob Dylan with his debt to Allen Ginsberg. They may have been taught to revere Beethoven, but at least equally came to revere Chuck Berry telling Beethoven to roll over and tell Tchaikovsky the news. Into the universities, they carried not only their cultural points of reference but a certain texture of popular-culture experience. If reading, study sessions, rallies, and lovemaking took place against a background of rock music, they wanted to know, why shouldn't the academy pay attention?

They, like the rest of their societies, were saturated with popular culture at a time when leftist commitments were tinged with poignancy. In the United States, in the early to mid-1970s, many (chiefly male) veterans of the American student movement found themselves in an impasse. In the late 1960s, riding the wave of the student movement, they had envisioned a revolutionary breakthrough in the politics of the Western world. As the tide went out, they found themselves beached. Having overrated the radical potential of students, they sought to compensate for the error by seeking out "radical chains" among other social groups. Marxist traditionalists found hope in a redefinition if not revival of a unitary "working class"—a hope that events failed to reward. Theorists of a "new working class" were quickly outdistanced by theorists and advocates of a "Third World Revolution," with the majority of humanity cast in the role of surrogate world proletariat.

The radical upsurge of the late 1960s had culminated, then, in anticlimax and undertow. In Britain, Labour, union, feminist, and antiracist momentum continued through the 1970s, though their conspicuousness masked the fact that the left had become a minority—a fact that became clear with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979. In the United States, despite tremendous energies and gains among women and gays, the 1970s were a time of standoff, which in the 1980s turned to defeat for the left. What was setting in, at these different paces, was a twilight of Labour and Democratic power. For leftists, the spirit of an insurgent class was no longer available. Instead, they were left with nostalgia for eras of cogent struggle they knew only at second or third hand. The general student movement was finished, except for brief episodes, leaving behind a range of identity-based movements, feminist, gay, and race-based. The place where these movements could most easily prevail was in the culture.

The combination of new opportunities and external frustrations brought a new wave of academic attention to popular culture. If one thought about youth culture properly, perhaps some sort of Marxist vision of history might be preserved. At least popular culture had vitality, rebelliousness, oppositional spirit—as, by implication, did the people who made it popular. If political power was foreclosed, the battlements of culture still

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remained to be taken. Or perhaps—if one really believed that the personal was the political—they had already been taken. Or perhaps the only reason poilitics looked unavailing was that the wrong culture was hegemonic. Whatever the case, popular culture might take the sting out of political defeat.

Cultural experience, in other words, dovetailed with the leftover political quest for a class, or its equivalent, that might lead the way to radical change. Culture, in this view, was a field of combat. The spirit of the moment was to survey the field and define the combat in terms imported from political struggles. The grid of meaning that was discerned within (or imposed upon) popular culture was imported from radical politics. It was not simply conflict but "contestation," or confrontation. It was not simply contestation but *the* stark and classic contestation between forces of liberation and forces of established repression.

From the late 1960s onward, as I have said, the insurgent energy was to be found in movements that aimed to politicize specific identities—racial minorities, women, gays. If the "collective behavior" school of once-conventional sociology had grouped movements in behalf of justice and democratic rights together with fads and fashions, cultural studies now set out to separate movements from fads, to take seriously the accounts of movement participants themselves, and thereby to restore the dignity of the movements—only to end up, in the 1980s, linking movements with fads by finding equivalent dignity in both spheres, so that, for example, dressing like Madonna might be upgraded to an act of "resistance" equivalent to demonstrating in behalf of the right to abortion, and watching a talk show on family violence was positioned on the same plane. In this way, cultural studies extended the New Left symbiosis with popular culture. Eventually, the popular culture of marginal groups (punk, reggae, disco, feminist poetry, hip-hop) was promoted to a sort of counterstructure of feeling, and even, at the edges, a surrogate politics—a sphere of thought and sensibility thought to be insulated from the pressures of hegemonic discourse, of instrumental reason, of economic rationality, of class, gender, and sexual subordination.

The other move in cultural studies was to claim that culture continued radical politics by other means. The idea was that cultural innovation was daily insinuating itself into the activity of ordinary people. Perhaps the millions had not actually been absorbed into the hegemonic sponge of mainstream popular culture. Perhaps they were freely dissenting. If "the revolution" had receded to the point of invisibility, it would be depressing to contemplate the victory of a hegemonic culture imposed by strong, virtually irresistible media. How much more reassuring to detect "resistance" saturating the pores of everyday life!

In this spirit, there emerged a welter of studies purporting to discover not only the "active" participation of audiences in shaping the meaning of popular culture, but the "resistance" of those audiences to hegemonic frames of interpretation in a variety of forms—news broadcasts (Dave Morley, *The 'Nationwide' Audience*, 1980); romance fiction (Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 1984); television fiction (Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, *The Export of Meaning*, 1990; Andrea Press, *Women Watching Television*, 1991); television in general (John Fiske, *Television Culture*, 1987); and many others. Thus, too, the feminist fascination with the fictions and talk shows of daytime "women's television"—in this view, the dismissal of these shows as "trivial," "banal," "soap opera," and so on, follows from the patriarchal premise that what takes place within the four walls of the home matters less than what takes place in a public sphere established (not coincidentally) for the convenience of men. Observing the immensity of the audiences for Oprah Winfrey and her legions of imitators, many in cultural studies upended the phenomenon by turning the definitions around. The largely female audiences for these shows would no longer be dismissed as distracted voyeurs, but praised as active participants in the exposure and therefore politicizing of crimes like incest, spousal abuse, and sexual molestation. These audiences would no longer be seen simply as confirming their "normality" with a safe, brief, well-bounded, vicarious acquaintanceship with deviance. They could be understood as an avant-garde social movement.

Above all, in a word, cultural studies has

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veered into populism. Against the unabashed elitism of conventional literary and art studies, cultural studies affirms an unabashed populism in which all social activities matter, all can be understood, all contain cues to the social nature of human beings. The object of attention is certified as worthy of such not by being "the best that has been thought and said in the world" but by having been thought and said by or for "the people"—period.

The popularity of popular culture is what makes it interesting—and not only as an object of study. It is the populism if not the taste of the analyst that has determined the object of attention in the first place. The sociological judgment that popular culture is important to people blurs into a critical judgment that popular culture must therefore be valuable. To use one of the buzzwords of "theory," there is a "slippage" from analysis to advocacy, defense, upward "positioning." Cultural studies often claims to have overthrown hierarchy, but what it actually does is invert it. What now certifies worthiness is the popularity of the object, not its formal qualities. If the people are on the right side, then what they like is good.

This tendency in cultural studies—I think it remains the main line—lacks irony. One purports to stand four-square for the people against capitalism, and comes to echo the logic of capitalism. The consumer sovereignty touted by a capitalist society as the grandest possible means for judging merit finds a reverberation among its ostensible adversaries. Where the market flatters the individual, cultural studies flatters the group. What the group wants, buys, demands is *ipso facto* the voice of the people. Where once Marxists looked to factory organization as the prefiguration of "a new society in the shell of the old," today they tend to look to sovereign culture consumers. David Morley, one of the key researchers in cultural studies, and one of the most reflective, has himself deplored this tendency in recent audience studies. He maintains that to understand that "the commercial world succeeds in producing objects . . . which do connect with the lived desires of popular audiences" is "by no means necessarily to fall into the trap . . . of an uncritical celebration of popular culture." But it is not clear where to draw the line against the celebratory tendency when one is inhibited from doing so by a reluctance to criticize the cultural dispositions of the groups of which one approves.

Unabashedly, the populism of cultural studies prides itself on being political. In the prevailing schools of cultural studies, to study culture is not so much to try to grasp cultural processes but to choose sides or, more subtly, to determine whether a particular cultural process belongs on the side of society's angels. An aura of hope surrounds the enterprise, the hope (even against hope) of an affirmative answer to the inevitable question: Will culture ride to the rescue of the cause of liberation? There is defiance, too, as much as hope. The discipline means to cultivate insubordination. On this view, marginalized groups in the populace continue to resist the hegemonic culture. By taking defiant popular culture seriously, one takes the defiers seriously and furthers their defiance. Cultural studies becomes "cult studs." It is charged with surveying the culture, assessing the hegemonic import of cultural practices and pinpointing their potentials for "resistance." Is this musical style or that literary form "feminist" or "authentically Latino"? The field of possibilities is frequently reduced to two: for or against the hegemonic. But the nature of that hegemony, in its turn, is usually defined tautologically: that culture is hegemonic that is promoted by "the ruling group" or "the hegemonic bloc," and by the same token, that culture is "resistant" that is affirmed by groups assumed (because of class position, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on) to be "marginalized" or "resistant." The process of labeling is circular, since it has been predetermined whether a particular group is, in fact, hegemonic or resistant.

The populism of cultural studies is fundamental to its allure, and to the political meaning its adherents find there, for cultural studies bespeaks an affirmation of popularity *tout court*. To say that popular culture is "worth attention" in the scholarly sense is, for cultural studies, to say something pointed: that the people who render it popular are not misguided when they do so, not fooled, not dominated, not distracted, not passive. If anything, the reverse: the premise is that popular culture is popular because and only

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because the people find in it channels of desire, pleasure, initiative, freedom. It is this premise that gives cultural studies its aura of political engagement—or at least political consolation. To unearth reason and value, brilliance and energy in popular culture is to affirm that the people have not been defeated. The cultural student, singing their songs, analyzing their lyrics, at the same time sings their praises. However unfavorable the balance of political forces, people succeed in living lives of vigorous resistance! Are the communities of African-Americans or Afro-Caribbeans suffering? Well, they have rap! (Leave aside the question of whether all of them want rap.) The right may have taken possession of 10 Downing Street, the White House, and Congress—and as a result of elections, embarrassingly enough!—but at least one is *engagé* in cultural studies.

Consolation: here is an explanation for the rise of academic cultural studies during precisely the years when the right has held political and economic power longer and more consistently than at any other time in more than a half century. Now, in effect, "the cultural is political," and more, it is regarded as central to the control of political and economic resources. The control of popular culture is held to have become decisive in the fate of contemporary societies—or at least it is the sphere in which opposition can find footing, find breathing space, rally the powerless, defy the grip of the dominant ideas, isolate the powers that be, and prepare for a "war of position" against their dwindling ramparts. On this view, to dwell on the centrality of popular culture is more than an academic's way of filling her hours; it is a useful certification of the people and their projects. To put it more neutrally, the political aura of cultural studies is supported by something like a "false consciousness" premise: the analytical assumption that what holds the ruling groups in power is their capacity to muffle, deform, paralyze, or destroy contrary tendencies of an emotional or ideological nature. By the same token, if there is to be a significant "opposition," it must first find a base in popular culture—and first also turns out to be second, third, and fourth, since popular culture is so much more accessible, so much more porous, so much more changeable than the economic and political order.

With time, what began as compensation hardened—became institutionalized—into a tradition. Younger scholars gravitated to cultural studies because it was to them incontestable that culture was politics. To do cultural studies, especially in connection with identity politics, was the politics they knew. The contrast with the rest of the West is illuminating. In varying degrees, left-wing intellectuals in France, Italy, Scandinavia, Germany, Spain and elsewhere retain energizing attachments to Social Democratic, Green, and other left-wing parties. There, the association of culture with excellence and traditional elites remains strong. But in the Anglo-American world, including Australia, these conditions scarcely obtain. Here, in a discouraging time, popular culture emerges as a consolation prize. (The same happened in Latin America, with the decline of left-wing hopes.) The sting fades from the fragmentation of the organized left, the metastasis of murderous nationalism, the twilight of socialist dreams virtually everywhere. Class inequality may have soared, ruthless individualism may have intensified, the conditions of life for the poor may have worsened, racial tensions may have mounted, unions and social democratic parties may have weakened or reached an impasse, but never mind. Attend to popular culture, study it with sympathy, and one need not dwell on unpleasant realities. One need not be unduly vexed by electoral defeats. One need not be preoccupied by the ways in which the political culture's center of gravity has moved rightward—or rather, one can put this down to the iron grip of the established media institutions. One need not even be rigorous about what one opposes and what one proposes in its place. Is capitalism the trouble? Is it the particular form of capitalism practiced by multinational corporations in a deregulatory era? Is it patriarchy (and is that the proper term for a society that has seen an upheaval in relations between women and men in the course of a half-century)? Racism? Antidemocracy? Practitioners of cultural studies, like the rest of the academic left, are frequently elusive. Speaking cavalierly of "opposi-

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tion" and "resistance" permits—rather, cultivates—a certain sloppiness of thinking, making it possible to remain "left" without having to face the most difficult questions of political self-definition.

The situation of cultural studies conforms to the contours of our political moment. It confirms—and reinforces—the current paralysis: the incapacity of social movements and dissonant sensibilities to imagine effective forms of public engagement. It substitutes an obsession with popular culture for coherent economic-political thought or a connection with mobilizable populations outside the academy and across identity lines. One must underscore that this is not simply because of cultural studies' default. The default is an effect more than a cause. It has its reasons. The odds are indeed stacked against serious forward motion in conventional politics. Political power is not only beyond reach, but functional majorities disdain it, finding the government and all its works contemptible. Few of the central problems of contemporary civilization are seriously contested within the narrow band of conventional discourse. Unconventional politics, such as it is, is mostly fragmented and self-contained along lines of racial, gender, and sexual identities. One cannot say that cultural studies diverts energy from a vigorous politics that is already in force.

Still, insofar as cultural studies makes claims for itself as an insurgent politics, the field is presumptuous and misleading. Its attempt to legitimize the ecstasies of the moment confirms the collective withdrawal from democratic hope. Seeking to find political energies in audiences who function as audiences, rather than in citizens functioning as citizens, the dominant current in cultural studies is pressed willy-nilly toward an uncritical celebration of technological progress. It offers no resistance to the primacy of visual and nonlinear culture over the literary and linear. To the contrary: it embraces technological innovation as soon as the latest developments prove popular. It embraces the sufficiency of markets; its main idea of the intellect's democratic commitment is to flatter the audience.

Is there a chance of a modest redemption? Perhaps, if we imagine a harder headed, less wishful cultural studies, free of the burden of imagining itself to be a political practice. A chastened, realistic cultural studies would divest itself of political pretensions. It would not claim to *be* politics. It would not mistake the academy for the larger society. It would be less romantic about the world—and about itself. Rigorous practitioners of cultural studies should be more curious about the world that remains to be researched—and changed. We would learn more about politics, economy, and society, and in the process, appreciate better what culture, and cultural study, do *not* accomplish. If we wish to do politics, let us organize groups, coalitions, demonstrations, lobbies, whatever; let us do politics. Let us not think that our academic work is already that. □

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Morris Dickstein

THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS

Some Personal History

The early New York intellectuals have written so much about themselves, and so many others have written about them, that it seems superfluous to sketch out who they were, where they came from, and which issues most engaged them. It is well understood that they came of age between the wars, that nearly all of them were drawn during the Great Depression to some form of Marxism or radical socialism, that most of them were Jewish and came from working-class backgrounds, that few of them imagined they would ever hold university positions, and that they came together as a group only in their break with Stalinism—first as independent radicals at *Partisan Review* in the late thirties, then as anti-communists at *PR* and *Commentary* in the decade after the war, and finally, in assorted political guises, at *Dissent*, the *New York Review of Books*, and various neoconservative journals, where they fell into sharp political and cultural disagreements and ceased to have a single coherent identity. To summarize their itinerary in this way suggests we are dealing with a purely historical phenomenon, an affair of perhaps two generations with little relevance today except as the background of some influential conservative intellectuals.

I would like to take a different tack here by describing what first drew *me* to the New York intellectuals when I was a college student in the late fifties and early sixties. I want to explain why the journey of those earlier figures remains meaningful, if occasionally troublesome, to much younger writers and critics. This will be an autobiographical story in three parts, with an epilogue assessing the current impact of the work of the New York intellectuals.

The story begins for me with my discovery of *Partisan Review* as an undergraduate at Columbia in 1959 and 1960. The magazine, though limited in circulation, was a byword of rarefied intellectuality, and all my friends with any pretense to serious interest in literature or politics began reading it. But this cultural encounter was a special rite of passage for the children of immigrants, the first in our families to go to college, just as it had been for the group that shaped the magazine more than two decades earlier. As someone who had come to Columbia from an orthodox yeshiva, I was going through an even more drastic process of acculturation than the secular socialist intellectuals of the twenties and thirties. Perhaps I heard some Jewish rhythm in the intensity of their dialectic, but I was also put off by their lack of Jewish information, their ignorance of a tradition they casually rejected for its provinciality. For me the intellectual life was a substitute for a severe religious training; for them it had been a way out of the constricted world of the Jewish working class and the Jewish family.

Columbia was then virtually an annex of the New York intellectual milieu, as Gore Vidal remarked in his recent memoir. Its faculty included men like Lionel Trilling, F.W. Dupee, Richard Chase, Richard Hofstadter, Daniel Bell, Meyer Schapiro, and C. Wright Mills, who were not simply scholars and teachers but had played a key role in the political and cultural debates of the previous decades. Their former students made up a significant part of the junior faculty. In what was probably my first intimation of becoming a New York intellectual, way back in the second grade, I had gotten a D in Conduct for talking

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too much in class; now I was rewarded for talking back to my teachers. Civility became less important than intellectual intensity. Abandoning vague hopes for a career in law or journalism, I envisioned a world in which I could live for ideas. Was it possible that someone would actually pay me to go on reading, writing, and talking, as I had been doing as a student all my life?

Traditional scholarship—the genteel life of the academic, the minute labors of research—this was not what I had in mind, for it seemed far too remote and passionless. I was no more eager to be a Renaissance scholar or a medieval historian than to become an accountant or biochemist. The New York intellectuals, on the other hand, were generalists who saw everything in relation to the drama of modernity—apocalyptic politics, Freudian psychology, existential philosophy, crisis theology, experimental art and literature. The Western tradition existed for them not as a stately pantheon of books and ideas but as a set of urgent and living options.

If they did not know their Bible half as well as many Christians did, they brought to the classic and modern writers a biblical zeal for interpretation and an almost religious sense of moral immediacy. I had discovered the modern writers myself in my freshman year, not in courses but because a dormmate insinuated Conrad and Joyce on me. Savoring Conrad's short novels and Joyce's *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, I felt I had never encountered sentences sculpted so exquisitely around meanings so elliptical. I soon saw that talking about books and ideas might be a calling as well as a pastime, and the New York writers seemed like good models of how that vocation could be pursued. When I read *The Liberal Imagination* the following year, the deal was clinched, for Trilling's play of mind and his supple, sinuous prose matched the modern writers on their own ground. It showed me that criticism could become a branch of literature.

But *The Liberal Imagination* also had a strong political viewpoint, personal to Trilling yet representative of all the New York intellectuals. This could be described as a warning about the effects of strong political commitment on culture. The liberal imagination, in Trilling's view, was *no* imagination, and no competitor to the imagination. It lacked the sense of variousness, complexity, and difficulty of the best modern writers. In its reformist zeal it took little account of the intransigence and human density of the real world. Its cultural outlook was like its political program—simplified, well-meaning, utopian, and abstract. It took me some time to realize that this critique of the politics and culture of the left was really the founding vision of the early New York intellectuals. This brings me to the second part of my story, which is about everything in their work that began to disturb me.

Trilling himself was an ironist, cool and detached in tone, but when it came to the issue of communism, or to the literary culture of liberals and fellow travelers, there was no mistaking his passion. It appealed to me deeply that the New York intellectuals brought the same moral urgency to certain political issues that they brought to literature.

It certainly seemed self-evident that literature produced out of a political agenda, even from the best motives, could fall into crude propaganda. I could even see that most of the New York intellectuals remained men of the left who were trying to rescue it from a totalitarian abyss. But coming of age in the 1950s had made us sensitive to the devastating effects of the cold war on American life—the narrow spectrum of opinion in the two major parties, the fear of blacklisting and reprisal for speaking out, the timidity and conformity of most political reporting, the complacency of the mass media. My friends and I were bored to death by the public discourse of the 1950s, so we idealized the thirties as a visionary period of smoldering political passions. We had no love for communism, but we hated what anticommunism had done to America. A power-mad Soviet autocrat had drowned the revolution in blood; but the New York intellectuals, by making the battle against Stalinism the litmus test of their lives, and persisting long after it ceased to be a threat, had betrayed their own earlier vision of combating injustice and shaping a better world.

The cold war was more than just a single is-

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sue that alienated me from the New York intellectuals. For them the struggle against communism was a core experience, but it made less sense to someone in college around 1960, when we could feel the world shifting under our feet. The cold war was beginning to break up, and new issues like racial equality seemed more pressing than anticommunism. In that year we were energized by the Freedom Riders seeking integration in the South, by the student protests against the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings in the Bay area, and above all by the Kennedy campaign, which promised to end the drift and stagnation of the Eisenhower years. Most New York intellectuals had little to say about these matters, but a few like Paul Goodman, Harold Rosenberg, Norman Mailer, and the other writers around *Dissent* felt a resurgence of their old radicalism, while others, veering to the right, saw every student demonstration as an imminent revival of Stalinism. Already in the 1950s, dissenters like Irving Howe and Mailer had attacked the new spirit of accommodation among intellectuals, including their timidity in the face of McCarthyism. But now, the sixties were splintering American culture, and the New York intellectuals were parting company along lines much deeper than anything that had divided them before.

Culturally, American life was changing as well, and this brought out another issue on which the New York intellectuals had little to say to me. If there was one matter that united them as much as their hatred of Stalinism it was their hatred of mass culture. Beginning with Clement Greenberg's essay on "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" in *Partisan Review* in 1939 and continuing with a number of pieces by Dwight Macdonald, the New York intellectuals, influenced by the emigré Marxists of the Frankfurt school, had turned the analysis of popular culture into a cottage industry. They saw it as mechanical, stereotyped, spurious, and impersonal—in every way the opposite of art, especially the difficult and demanding modern art they loved. They described it sarcastically as "democratic" art, a self-evident oxymoron, the cultural equivalent of the Popular Front.

But by 1959 and 1960, when Dwight Macdonald's longest pieces on mass culture appeared in *PR*, their arguments already seemed snobbish and irrelevant. A new movie culture and soon a new music would affect American life as drastically as the civil rights movement or the New Frontier. In the hands of a new generation of film critics, Hollywood's commercial heyday began to look like the cinema's golden age. The great European directors of the early sixties and the great new rock performers soon showed that popular culture could be as personal, as expressive, and as vigorously original as any modernist writing. Eventually even *Partisan Review* would publish an essay on the Beatles and *Commentary* would print one on Bob Dylan, but we had a sense that they were led kicking and screaming to the altar, from which they soon fled.

Well, if I found the New York intellectuals so unpalatable on both politics and culture, if I found them insufficiently Jewish, obtuse about much of what happened in the sixties, and caught in the time warp of the cold war, why have I continued to identify with them, and why have I kept up a connection to *Partisan Review* since the first piece I published there at the age of twenty-two? This brings me to the third part of my Hegelian triad, the synthesis or rapprochement. Much of what has happened to American culture since the sixties has confirmed some of the original positions of the New York intellectuals. First the New Left, frustrated by Nixon's failure to end the Vietnam War, disintegrated into the kind of violent Marxist sects that antagonists like Irving Howe had warned against—prematurely, I think—five years earlier. Then the genius of American capitalism found innumerable ways of twisting the fresh spirit of the counterculture to commercial uses. Finally, some radical currents of the sixties, thwarted by the resistance of American society, retreated into ponderous academic theory, combining the worst features of politically correct thinking with the worst features of arcane scholarship, the very tendencies from which the New York intellectuals had once delivered us.

Certainly it was no accident that the late seventies saw the first of a slew of memoirs and historical accounts of the New York intellectuals, just when they should have been passing ob-

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securely into history. It was not simply that they themselves, once notably private about their lives, were reaching the age of reminiscence, or that other people, who had ignored them in their prime, were suddenly gossiping about the foibles of intellectuals. In fact they attracted attention because their work seemed pertinent to the new cultural situation, and I found myself more sympathetic to it than I had been in a decade. For the neoconservatives, expanding their power and influence, the New Yorkers were vindicated solely by their long opposition to communism, which the New Right would emulate in its own campaign against the legacy of the sixties. But the rest of us, surrounded by academic orthodoxy, appalled by the jargon of a recondite, self-indulgent, and highly politicized scholarship, grew nostalgic for the old but unforgotten days of the public intellectual. The original New Yorkers had not had a wide influence in their own time, and sometimes they had written only to amuse, assault, or impress each other, but their work seemed a model of how to connect intelligence with politics, how to see a work of art in its social framework while respecting its autonomy and complexity.

I relished their intellectual style, their colloquial ease and wit in developing ideas, but this did not mean that I suddenly agreed with them on every issue. Their sharp division of highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow culture still made little sense except as an ideological formation of the 1950s and a reflex of modernism. But the tentacular growth of the electronic media, with Japanese hardware and Hollywood software colonizing the world, had created just the kind of mechanized, impersonal mass culture the New York intellectuals had once feared. This was also the dawning of the age of postmodernism, with its indiscriminate appetite for the whole media circus, with its mixture of fashion and vision, advertising and art, low and high culture. The New Yorkers were no help in understanding what was vital about popular culture, or what was liberating about the politics and art of the early and mid-sixties, but they looked much better once their worst nightmares had come to pass.

So I conclude this story with two cheers for the New York intellectuals, not as a guide to the present but as a vibrant example of how to think and write about it. The model is misappropriated by neoconservatives, who have simply replaced one political orthodoxy with another, worshiping at the shrine of the free market, defending the status quo, flailing at the remains of the left while gradually dissolving into the larger conservative movement. The legacy is best embodied by younger critics, journalists, and intellectuals who have soberly reexamined their own political passions from the sixties just as the New York intellectuals reassessed their role in the radical movements of the 1930s. This includes black public intellectuals rethinking the premises of black nationalism, feminists who have turned away from the excesses of feminism while affirming its original goals, academic critics who have emerged on the far side of theory with a new feeling for art and a pressing need to address a general audience, and political writers who have come to understand that melioristic passions must be bolstered by democratic methods and realistic goals. If the New Yorkers bear some responsibility for a generation of entrenched neoconservatives, they also helped produce a generation of hard-headed liberals and social democrats, who, like their predecessors, have carved out their own positions from the ruins and remnants of their earlier beliefs.

For younger critics, the New Yorkers have served as antidotes to academic specialization and journalistic superficiality. I would guess that there are as many would-be New York intellectuals today as there were in the forties and fifties, and probably more than you could find fifteen years ago, when academic orthodoxy went unchallenged and the nostalgia for the public intellectual was just beginning to be felt. Whether these younger writers will someday become the stuff of gossip and legend, and whether *their* work will serve as future models of public discourse, remains to be seen. □

This article is adapted from a talk given at the American Sociological Association convention in August 1996.

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Marshall Berman

PICASSO SURVIVING

I love museums, but I don't expect to get deliriously excited in them. However, the Museum of Modern Art's "Picasso and Portraiture" exhibit last summer knocked me out. Thousands of people jammed the place, and circled and spiraled through it again and again, making florid gestures, and shouting exclamations—"Get this," and "Incredible," and "My God," and "Oh, wow!" It was startling to find ourselves in a museum crowd whose emotional fervor felt like Yankee Stadium or Madison Square Garden, or like the Fillmore East and other nice places long gone.

The show introduced us to dozens of subjects, but its real subjects were love and death. The first really striking and shocking painting was an in-the-coffin portrait of the poet Carlos Casegemas, dear friend of Picasso's youth, who had killed himself in 1901 when the woman he loved refused him. His pale blue melancholy face is so soulful, the entrance wound so brutal, a giant candle's pointillist flame (love? art?) reaches out and just barely touches him. A little later, we meet Eva Goulet, one of Picasso's unsung heroines. She was his model and girlfriend in the 1910s, she died of TB early in World War I, and he nursed her tenderly at the end. In his Cubist heyday her presence is symbolic and abstract, a guitar, the title "*Ma Jolie.*" We meet her in a more emdodied form when she is near death, a barely perceptible lovely girl who is not just wrapped but trapped in layered Cubist planes.

In these early works, we can see Picasso vibrating on the same wavelength as T.S. Eliot, another child of the 1880s who lived long. In "Whispers of Immortality," a lyric from the 1910s, Eliot's narrator is a learned *shlemiel*, meditating on culture, history, and the inadequacy of sex to make men happy in the face of death. "Webster was much possessed by death," he begins. So was John Donne, he says: indeed, Donne's feeling for death brought his erotic vision to life.

> Donne, I suppose, was such another
> Who found no substitute for sense,

WORKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

PICASSO AND PORTRAITURE: REPRESENTATION AND TRANSFORMATION. Exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Summer 1996. Catalogue, edited by William Rubin, with essays by Anne Baldessari, Pierre Daix, Michael FitzGerald, Brigitte Léal, Marilyn McCully, Robert Rosenblum, William Rubin, Hélène Seckel, and Kirk Varnedoe. MOMA, 1996. 496 pages, illustrated.

"ESCAPING PICASSO," by Adam Gopnik, the *New Yorker*, December 16, 1996.

PORTRAIT OF PICASSO AS A YOUNG MAN. By Norman Mailer. 398 pages, illustrated. Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 1995.

SURVIVING PICASSO. Feature film directed by James Ivory, produced by Ismail Merchant, written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Opened fall 1996. Based on *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*, the biography by Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington. Avon Books.

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To seize and clutch and penetrate;
Expert beyond experience,

He knew the anguish of the marrow
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

Picasso's portraits can show us how devastated he was by the early deaths of people he loved. He had to find a way to choose life. It could well be that this search led him "to seize and clutch and penetrate," and to become "expert beyond experience." I don't mean he learned to engage in sexual activity—he seems to have done that very nicely all his life, inhibited only by age and health. I mean something deeper: what Eliot meant by "to seize and clutch and penetrate." These verbs are obviously about sex, but they're more importantly about imagining and knowing other people.

Even as Eliot's narrator reflects, the poet picks him up and throws him into a jump-cut. Suddenly, this lonely man finds himself in the presence of a vibrantly sexual woman:

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncorseted, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

Who is this dark lady? She is foreign (does "Russian" mean Jewish here?); her face is not just made-up but "underlined," written on, suggesting art, and a kinship between them; beneath her dress she is visibly, hence actively, undressed. In the next stanza, she smells like "the couched Brazillian jaguar" (animal, exotic, dangerous), and—unusual in the 1910s—"Grishkin has a maisonette." An alluring fantasy: a foreign, arty, odorous, physically friendly girl with an apartment of her own. But, in Eliot's imaginative world, fantasy is as far as it goes. For his heroes, the dream girl is always just out of reach. They are like Newland Archer in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, pacing outside Countess Olenska's door: they know they are welcome inside but can't bring themselves to ring the bell. They dream fervidly about open sexuality, about human mutuality, about the infinite mystery of life in the maisonette; but in the end they stay outside alone.*

It might help us "get" Picasso if we imagine him—not the beautiful boy with all the world before him, but the grown man who has been to too many funerals—in a scene like this. You know nothing on earth will keep *him* out of the maisonette; no matter what might happen, he's going in.

Maybe, then, Picasso redeemed himself from death by imagining human sexuality in explosive and original ways. In collaboration with some extraordinary women, he learned to create some of the sexiest art of the century. Norman Mailer, in his *Portrait of Picasso as a Young Man*, is right to stress learning: he argues that Picasso's sexuality was not the easy self-confidence of a stud, but an uphill struggle, precarious and vulnerable, an imaginary construct that he had to reconstruct again and again. This made sex a source of dread, but also of dramatic power, a way to say, "Look, we have come through."

The women who came through with him most dramatically are Marie-Thérèse Walter and Dora Maar, stars of the MOMA show. Picasso was in love with them in the 1920s and 1930s, at times simultaneously. Love filled him with energy, and he portrayed his loved ones inexhaustibly, in a multitude of media, in an amazing variety of incarnations, infused with an in-your-face sexual energy that hits us like a wave. Now, there are people out there (many in the art world: see Adam Gopnik in the *New Yorker*) who hate Picasso obsessively, and many of those people seem to see these protraits as sexual assaults on themselves. It's true, Picasso grabs spectators in private places. But I think if we look close, we will be impressed that he could see women with such personal tenderness along with overpowering body heat. Freud said the capacity to feel both tenderness and sensuality toward the same person was a sign of being grown up; he also said he didn't think many people got there. But Picasso got there, and a lot of his art helps us see how a fusion of tender and sensual feeling can

*Is this unfair to the creator of "Sweeney Agonistes"? In Apeneck Sweeney's block of flats, people routinely fuck (and kill) each other. But that is the life of the underclass as comically imagined by a member of the overclass. His own class, tragically imagined, can't seize life at all. But its members can dream up a storm.

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look.

Visitors to the Modern have known Marie-Thérèse for some time, though we didn't know we knew her till now. One of the MOMA's classic paintings is the 1932 "Girl Before a Mirror": she turns out to be that girl. Her eruption into Picasso's life late in the twenties gave his art a sudden surge of energy. Over the next decade he made hundreds of portraits of her. In the most compelling of these, the shapes are curvy and organic, the feeling lyrical, the pace breathless—it's as if he felt he had to finish these paintings before some metaphysical closing time. The gold of her hair and the pink of her flesh vibrate intensely, often set off by rich blue and purple clothes. (A post-Cubist woman gets to have more than one body, so she can be at once gorgeously dressed and nude.) Picasso loved painting Marie-

"Girl Before a Mirror." *Photograph ©1997 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ©1997 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*

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Thérèse asleep. (Maybe it was the one place she went hoping to get away from him.) In one such painting, the easy chair beneath her seems to catch fire. In another, a swirling palm tree sprouts from her lower body. In another she sleeps naked, and the sun outside echoes her roundnesses and seems to draw on her as a source of heat and light. It is as if Picasso is laying claim to all the clichés of endearment, and trying to make the words flesh. Sometimes he draws her like a giant cartoon beach ball, with delicious curves that invite our touch. But there is always a mystery about this Marie-Thérèse, a way she has of curving into herself, so that she radiates a perfect inner harmony that no lover can touch. In the portraits that stopped traffic last summer, she seems almost a subject without subjectivity, no more self-conscious than the sun. Yet she is nothing like the sun in the "Girl Before a Mirror," a great hymn to inwardness, where both the subject and her self-image are absorbed in each other.

Dora, who entered Picasso's life in the mid-1930s, is her metaphysical complement, the dark side of the moon. If Picasso's Marie-Thérèse is defined by organic curves and naturalness, his vision of Dora is all jagged artificiality—her makeup, jewelry, pointy nails, her elegant dresses with abstract designs, her look of self-consciousness, her heraldic color of neon red. She looks like somebody who has constructed a montage of herself; Picasso seems to see her as a kindred spirit, a fellow modern artist. (Dora was in fact a photographer, and the one person to see, and portray, every phase of "Guernica.") Like the dark ladies in Henry James's fiction and the brunettes in classic *film noir*, she has been around the block. The contradictory aspects of her personality are shown in sharply clashing colors and post-Cubist skewered planes. In a portrait called "Weeping Woman," her face appears in such a state of active disintegration, it's unbearable to look. What could it have been like for Picasso himself? Her wrecked face seems pointed at him like a *J'accuse!* sign. But he not only lets the sign stand; he himself has put it there. Dora has nothing like Marie-Thérèse's aura, her inner radiance; but she has something else, she looks infinitely more *interesting*. She comes across as a woman who has plenty to say. The portraits of her are fascinating as collaborations, as acts of dialogue.

For some years Picasso seems to have loved both women at once, and they seem to have loved him, in ways that must have been unbearable for them all. One day in January 1939, maybe hoping to sort his feelings out, he painted large oil portraits of both women, in identical positions—"Reclining Woman with Book"—in the identical place in his studio. For awhile, they hung together on his wall, then they were scattered to different parts of the world. Last summer, at the MOMA, after half a century, they came together again—in all likelihood (insurance costs, and so on) for the last time. Neither woman on this wall looked beautiful. (Both looked worn out, and you can see why.) But both looked sublime: so serious, so intense, so wholly *there*. Given women of such depth, how could you not love them both?

These women are featured in *Surviving Picasso*, the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala film that opened this past fall. But the makers of this movie don't love them, and indeed don't have any interest in what they might have been like, apart from two more items on the list of VOPs, Victims of Picasso. In one scene Marie-Thérèse and Dora actually have a physical fight, but we never learn what they thought they were fighting for. The point of the scene, it appears, is that Picasso (who is seen painting on a scaffold while the fight goes on) laughs at them both because Picasso was a Bastard. That Picasso was a Bastard turns out to be the point of every scene in the movie; it is drummed into our heads relentlessly lest we forget. Again and again we are shown potentially complex characters in potentially interesting situations, but all their life and energy are sacrificed to the prosecutorial aim of proving beyond a doubt that Picasso was a Bastard. We get the idea in the first minute. Captions tell us, "The German Occupation Of Paris In 1943," and an image of Picasso stamping down his studio stairs is juxtaposed with an image of Nazi Storm Troopers stamping down Parisian streets. You could walk out very soon after this, and you wouldn't miss much.

Anthony Hopkins plays the villain with great verve, and at first we are happy to see him strut and fret and thrust out his chest and laugh dia-

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bolically. But soon we grow weary even of a face, a body, a voice we like. Picasso here is not so much a character as a machine for generating evil. This role imprisons Hopkins far more effectively than Hannibal Lecter's cage in *The Silence of the Lambs*. Before long, we feel ourselves drifting off into nostalgia not only for Kirk Douglas gnashing his teeth in *Lust for Life*, but even for Captain Hook, whose creator had the grace to let the villain tell jokes about himself.

It may be extravagant to say *Surviving Picasso* has ideas, but at least one of its themes echoes thoughts that have long been around in parts of the art world: as much as Picasso is condemned as a beastly sinner, his lifelong rival Matisse is venerated as a transcendent saint. About halfway through the movie, Picasso and Françoise Gilot visit Matisse, whom we are told is close to death but who glides along on his crutches like an Olympic skater, overflows with smiles, and speaks in Zen parables like Yoda in *Star Wars*. He shows Picasso his late portraits of women, and says that he (Unlike Others We Could Name) is attuned to the biological life cycle, at home in the fullness of his years, and happy to live a sexual life in his imagination. Picasso says, "You don't seem to feel any hate for the women you love." Matisse's serene reply is, "No, I leave that to you, *Monsieur*." Once more the movie's message is "Behold this master, perfect in both art and life: see how he feels and loves and creates in total purity, without ambivalence." And right opposite him, as if on a cathedral's façade, "Behold that degenerate, who is driven by hate along with love, and who wallows in ambivalence." If we could talk back, we might want to say that love and hate are primal feelings, and that both our art and our lives will be better if we have the guts to see and to say how they are intertwined. Picasso, like Freud, spent his life wrestling with the unconscious, and with the dialectics of love and hate. People who try to confront human ambivalence get spat on in the streets (as Freud did in old Vienna), or in print, or on film. They are hopelessly impure, prime candidates for labels like "Degenerate Art." But we should be glad they're there: it takes an impure art and impure ideas to show all of us who we really are, and to help us imagine who we can be.

The makers of *Surviving Picasso* flaunt their list of VOPs as an excuse not to look at his work. Thus the movie contains plenty of art business, but (unlike the old Hollywood art biopics) very little art. Last summer's portraiture show and its splendid catalogue can help us see how Picasso's art connected to people. It's certain that he acted horribly toward women he loved. (Toward men he loved, he might have been even worse.) But it's ridiculous to call him, as he is often called, a misogynist. His portraits capture not only women's beauty, but their *dignity*. He gave Marie-Thérèse Walter and Dora Maar—and Fernande Olivier, and Eva Goulet, and Sara Murphy, and Françoise Gilot, and Jacqueline Roque, and more—a permanent presence in world culture. As long as we have art, and the mechanical reproduction of art, people will know these women and admire them because of him.

What has any of this to do with the project of *Dissent*? Modern capitalism forces us all constantly to revolutionize the way we live, just in order to survive. One of the great collective dreams of change is the modern dream of love: the primary social contract, lonely people bringing together their bodies and souls. Market society thrives on this dream, but it throws us into a fast lane where we crash against the people we want to love most. For most of the twentieth century, Picasso drove brilliantly through the world art market's fast lane—indeed, he did as much as anyone to create this lane. His sheer overdrive endangered everybody who got close to him. The older he got, the more he resembled a classic tycoon, choked by his own corporate conglomerations, dead to anyone's needs but his own. But in his prime he invented new forms of empathy, new ways to get close to other people, and to open up the self: his art was a way to grow and a medium of love. Culture, Marx said, is public property. Once we grasp what we need, we can take it and make it our own. Dreamers of democratic socialism, we can thrive on Picasso's imaginative visions of what the modern self and modern love can be. □

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Todd Gitlin

ON COMPLEXITY AND COALITIONS

A Reply to Iris Young

Iris Young ("The Complexities of Coalition," Winter 1997) admits that the left is electorally feeble, but within her framework, it seems to me, she cannot explain the feebleness. Her enthusiasm for the remarkable Jesse Jackson efforts of the eighties may provide a key. She is enthusiastic about the fact that the 1988 Jackson campaign won more primary votes than Mondale won in 1984. As if the objective of politics ought to be scoring high in a losing cause rather than winning real results for real people! If the objective of the left is actually to change policy—to shrink class inequality, open up universal access to decent medical care and housing, control depredations of private power, and yes, redress the burdens of group oppressions—then the Rainbow efforts demonstrate how fragile was the sort of nominal coalition she advocates. Compiling a list of marginal groups does not a majority make. And even the groups she lists were more fragile than she acknowledges. The Rainbow Coalition was hostage to the moves of one gifted individual. Without his commitment, it crumbled.

In *The Twilight of Common Dreams* I argue that *one*—not the only—reason for that sort of collapse is that, for the past generation, very little energy on the left has gone to promoting visions and projects that might bring together a majority. The politics of identity affirmation, while useful for certain purposes, has been helpless to avert attacks on labor and the poor (though I hardly assert that "identity politics is at least partly responsible for these attacks"). The fact that feminists opposed the awful welfare bill is beside the point. The point is that there were not nearly enough activist feminists, and they (and the rest of us) did not do nearly enough to prevail over a Republican Congress and a president swinging right. There was no Million Person March to avert the further impoverishment of the poor. It is not good will that concerns me, it is efficacy. In particular, roughly 37 percent of the population consists of non-Hispanic white males; if the identity-based left writes them off as an oppressor bloc, surely other political forces do not. The same goes for the tens of millions in the anxious middle classes, female and male, of various races and ethnicities, who are culturally to the right of Young and me. What shall we do about these retrogrades? Does no legitimate goal ever have to be sacrificed, muted, or postponed in politics? Do we get to have it all?

No. Young and I both deplore the false dichotomy between organizing for group recognition and organizing for more economic and health equality. But the imbalance between the two goals has been, shall we say, severe. Moreover, the picture she paints is seriously incomplete. In the Winter issue of *Dissent*, for example, Zelda Bronstein gives an all-too-typical example of how a certain feminist dogmatism obstructed the campaign for health care reform in California ("Feminism and the Common Good: The California Health Care Case"). In my book, I tell the story of how the Oakland school board dissipated reform energies in an absurd more-multicultural-than-thou assault on the most multicultural textbooks California has ever seen. Similar examples are legion. Iris Young may be right that some identity boundaries have been softening recently. If so, amen, and let's see more of the same.

At the risk of repeating an argument of my

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book, let me say that the achievements of identity politics are many, considerable, and overdue. But the tactics and rhetoric that were valuable for certain purposes in 1969 or 1975 do not suffice on a vastly different political terrain in 1997. How much of history consists of good things turning into intellectual and literal prisons! Intellectual honesty requires that we, all of us, recognize the price and the limits of our victories. To condemn backlash is easy, to take some responsibility for it, hard. Group hubris detracts from the effort. So does the cant of "culture" and "identity" now entrenched across the academy and the art world.

In this light, I think Anne Phillips makes a constructive contribution in her article in the Winter issue ("Why Worry About Multiculturalism?"), and I agree with her conclusion that "the key question . . . is whether we conceive of multiculturalism as required by considerations of equity or as derived from a thesis about culture as a primary good."

Iris Young Responds

Todd Gitlin seems more worried than I am about the political impact of English departments and art galleries. To my delight, however, on most other issues we seem to agree: that the achievements of group-specific movements are many and overdue, that multiculturalism is politically important for reasons of equity, that movements should avoid being hostage to leaders, and that opposing issues of recognition to issues of economic and health equality sets up a false dichotomy.

We also agree that political good will is worth little if it does not accomplish change. Clearly, not enough energy on the left in recent years has gone to promoting visions and projects that might bring together a majority. I think the problem has less to do with ideas and rhetoric than with organization. The progressive public responses to the health care debate and welfare repeal were weak partly because there was little organization in place that could begin mobilizing people. In both cases organizational capacity had to be built after the issues hit the national public agenda, where they moved very quickly.

As I perceive our current situation, all kinds of issue-specific mass organizing has waned in the last decade—issue-specific feminist, gay and lesbian, African-American, and Chicano organizing as much as community organizing around issues of peace, environment, affordable housing, and employment. We risk further fraying the thin threads of trust if we blame each other for such decline in mass movement and organizational capacity. The point is to get to work building new organizations and coalitions. As I noted in my essay, developments in the Labor party, New party, and Independent Progressive Politics Network, among others, are encouraging. These are all electorally oriented formations, however. We need both party formations and issue-specific movements, in my opinion, to strengthen the left in this country.

Thus, I completely agree with Gitlin that broad-based cooperation among all with reason to oppose corporate power and increasing inequality is the order of the day. I must continue to insist, however, that to make such organizing inclusive requires attending to the group-specific differences in structural position and experience of all working and poor people. Those who attack so-called identity politics suggest instead that the way to build inclusive coalitions is to ask everyone to put aside their specificity and mouth deceptively simple slogans. So in the article in the Winter issue to which Gitlin refers, Zelda Bronstein proposes that "Promote the general welfare" should replace "Sisterhood is powerful." Appeal to the "general welfare" is vacuous, however, unless all the specific constituencies that ought to be included in a progressive coalition define what it means through dialogue. Gitlin finds Bronstein's account an exemplar of "identity politics" obstructing achievement of the common good. As Bronstein admits, however, it appears at least as much to be the story of an arrogant group of "key people" who attempt to

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set the common agenda for a diverse movement and then expect constituencies to sign on.

In the February 1997 issue of the *Progressive*, Adolph Reed proposes another true but vacuous slogan—"We are all workers"—as an alternative to the "identity politics" he derides. Anyone who is not rich is a worker according to this slogan: the small farmer, the police officer, the woman who cares for children at home, the high-paid college professor, the retired steel worker, the hotel maid, the bookstore owner, the man arrested for petty larceny who has had few jobs in ten years. As soon as we get specific, the differences and potential conflicts among working people surface, and it is obvious that these differences are conditioned, among other things, by structures of gender, race and age.

It is simply false to suggest that these structures are only about "culture" and "identity," as opposed to the real material issues of class. Abortion, for example, is not an "identity" issue; it is an issue that concerns the most basic material options for many women. Gitlin says that class versus group difference is a false dichotomy. If he is right, and I believe he is, then isn't it time for certain left writers and activists to stop opposing the purity of class to the degradations of gender, race, and sexuality? We must try to forge a movement that brings together many different kinds of people with different social situations into a working people's movement. We will be successful in doing that, however, only if we develop more means for people to explain to one another the specificity of their lives and commitments, and to build together a connected analysis of how structural changes in capitalism are hurting all of us and how we might reverse those harms. □

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Joanne Barkan

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital*

One evening early in 1970—as best I can remember: Friends and I stopped by the makeshift graduate-student rathskeller in the basement of an apartment building on Charles Street in Baltimore, just opposite the main gate of the Johns Hopkins University. The place reeked of beer and cigarettes, and we sat at one end of a large table, listening to Tim (I can't recall his last name) describe his latest political pilgrimage to New York. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Hopkins, which counted Tim among its participants, had gone dormant over winter break, never to be revived. During the same month, Tim, son of a wealthy Floridian, had gone Trotskyist and joined a sect called the Workers' League.

Tim's story was the oft-told tale of the late 1960s: grand transformations overnight. He dropped out of school, one semester before getting his B.A. He took to wearing a white shirt and bow tie in order to look respectable for preaching to the working class. A female cadre with long straight hair moved into his apartment, and together they constituted the League's Baltimore cell.

Tim spent days passing out leaflets at an auto plant in a nearby town. He acquired a new debating style which included listening intently, then raising an index finger in a nonthreatening manner, and saying, "I want to take you up sharply on that point." He appeared at the rathskeller once with Wally, a heavy hitter from the party's New York office. Wally wore a white shirt and bow tie and did the same I-want-to-take-you-up-sharply bit.

On the evening in question, Tim was holding forth on the need for "us" (radicals, leftists, revolutionaries . . .) to know our facts about the American system in order to argue persuasively with "them" (the rest of America, especially the proletariat). Tim held up his copy of Baran and Sweezy's Monopoly Capital *and declared, "We need to memorize this book from cover to cover!"*

Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, two Marxist economists, began writing *Monopoly Capital* in the mid-1950s. After Baran died in 1964, Sweezy put the already revised manuscript into final form, and Monthly Review Press published the work in 1966. The New Left in the United States adopted *Monopoly Capital* almost immediately as a standard text—one of those books "everyone" read or discussed in a study group or recommended to radical friends. Outside the United States, the book enjoyed equal (and perhaps longer lasting) success. Between 1966 and 1974, *Monopoly Capital* was translated into sixteen languages.

As I considered how to reconsider *Monopoly Capital*, several "rules of the game" appealed to me: first I'd recollect whatever I could from my 1970 reading (not much it turns out); then I would reread the book cold—that is, without any background material or commentary; and finally I'd use whatever might help to understand why *Monopoly Capital* suited the New Left so well. I haven't set out to evaluate the book's economic theory in relation to orthodox Marxism or contemporary left economics; those analyses already exist, and I'm not qualified to add to the debate. The economics of *Monopoly Capital* interests me now only in that it "spoke" to American New Leftists a generation ago. Of course, the book spoke about much else as well.

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The authors chose as a subtitle "An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order." It's a substantial essay—some 353 pages in one paperback edition (London: Pelican Books, 1968), followed by an appendix called "Estimating the Economic Surplus," by Joseph D. Phillips. Yet given the project, the text is brief. Baran and Sweezy aimed to do for mid-twentieth-century America what Karl Marx had done for nineteenth-century Britain: reveal the "laws of motion" of the underlying capitalist system.

The goal sounds grand; it was also unique. No one else—the authors claim in the introductory chapter—had attempted this feat. They tear into "bourgeois social science" for its proclivity to know more and more about less and less; it failed to look at society as a whole. Baran and Sweezy applaud Marxian social science for its focus on the social order as a whole, but the Marxists, too, disappoint: "Marxists have too often been content to repeat familiar formulations, as though nothing really new had happened since the days of Marx and Engels—or of Lenin at the latest."

The authors explain the "stagnation of Marxian social science" quite simply: "the Marxian analysis of capitalism still rests in the final analysis on the assumption of a competitive economy." Here we have ground zero for the Baran-Sweezy *weltanschauung*; everything takes off from monopolization. The core economic argument of the book runs like this:

Huge corporations—rather than small firms each producing a negligible fraction of a homogeneous output—now dominate the U.S. economy. Because the giants collude in setting prices and output levels, monopoly (or its functional equivalent, oligopoly) has transformed the laws of motion of American capitalist development. The corporations maximize profits so successfully that "surplus" (what a society produces minus the costs of producing it) tends to rise relative to total production. The system—monopoly capitalism—must therefore constantly confront its central dilemma: how to absorb excess surplus.

The drive to absorb surplus ends up warping both economy and society because the system cannot digest surplus in rational ways. The authors describe at length how business expediency, class interests, and ideology shut off various options. For example, bosses squeeze wages more than is necessary in order to keep labor in line and preserve class distinctions; the ruling elites limit civilian government spending because it would compete with one or another private-sector interest and because high-quality public services (such as education) would break the ruling class's monopoly on privilege and success.

With so many outlets closed off, surplus streams into two available channels: the sales effort (advertising, superficial product differentiation, packaging, unnecessary model changes) and military spending. The authors label advertising "the chief architect of the famous 'American Way of Life.' " As for military spending, the authors argue that the United States needs it to police a neocolonial empire and to contain and combat the rival world socialist system. "And the truth is that policing the empire and fighting socialism are rapidly becoming, if they are not already, one and the same." Happily for the oligarchy, military spending sops up surplus while promoting the "correct" interests at home and abroad. Baran and Sweezy warn, however, that technological advances may make the military a less effective sponge over time.

So in this version of monopoly's story, the system not only tilts toward economic stagnation and crisis, it directs its productive energies to ever more irrational ends. The authors believe anyone willing to look at the facts in the United States will see

> that idle men and idle machines coexist with deprivation at home and starvation abroad, that poverty grows in step with affluence, that enormous amounts of resources are wasted in frivolous and often harmful ways, that the United States has become the symbol and defender of reaction all over the world, that we are engaged in several wars and clearly headed toward more and bigger ones. . . .

For Baran and Sweezy, a Marxist analysis cannot stop here—that is, at the economic base of society. They write that "we also believe that the modes of utilization of surplus constitute the indispensable mechanism linking the economic foundation of society with what Marxists call its political, cultural, and ideological superstructure." So after six chapters on the generation and

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absorption of surplus and a chapter on the history of monopoly capitalism, we find three final chapters called, respectively, "Monopoly Capitalism and Race Relations," "On the Quality of Monopoly Capitalist Society," and "The Irrational System." The final arguments run like this:

Racism plays the handy role it has always played under capitalism—dividing the working class and keeping one group so downtrodden that other exploited groups can feel superior. Yet the barbarous contradiction between potential abundance for all Americans and oppression for blacks cannot be hidden as it previously was. At the same time, the consciousness of blacks is being transformed "[a]s Africans—and Asians and Latin Americans—carry their revolutions forward from national independence to socialist egalitarianism. . . ."

The authors argue that the elites know "the very existence of their system is at stake"; they hope to derail growing black protest by implementing legal civil rights ("a narrow bourgeois concept") and opening doors for a small number of the black bourgeoisie ("tokenism"). To no avail. "The Negro masses cannot hope for integration into American society as it is now constituted. But they can hope to be one of the historical agents which will overthrow it. . . ."

On the quality of monopoly capitalist society, Baran and Sweezy report that almost half of all Americans have less than an adequate income, millions live in substandard housing, suburbia sprawls with its crowded developments of shoddy tract housing, smog-producing cars choke cities and the roads leading to them, the educational system produces at best "science barbarians" and "high-IQ imbeciles." In short, monopoly capitalism "has utterly failed to provide the foundations of a society capable of promoting the healthy and happy development of its members."

The irrationality of the system, for Baran and Sweezy, infects every aspect of life in the United States: it is to blame for the sham of democracy for the propertyless, the suffocation of all positive ideology by anticommunism, alienation from work, meaningless consumption, the degeneration of leisure into stultifying amusement, the degradation of conversation into chatter, pretense instead of emotional commitment, the failure to create a new morality after the collapse of the old codes, the debasement of culture, the withering away of meaningful political activity, chronic psychic orgasmic impotence masked by increased sexual activity, bankrupt relations within the bourgeois family. Everyone exists "in a jungle in which there is no love and no trust, no purpose worth striving for and no ideal worth fighting for."

In this wretched world, the authors reason that true rationality must lie in overthrowing the irrational system. Unfortunately the Marxists' traditional agent—the industrial proletariat—has shrunk in size. Making matters worse, most white workers embrace consumerism and bourgeois ideology. Society's greatest victims—the unemployed, migrant farm workers, inhabitants of urban ghettoes, the elderly poor—do not constitute a coherent opposition. Does the future promise only more psychic disorders, leading eventually to a complete system breakdown in the United States? The one countervailing force, say Baran and Sweezy, is resistance around the globe to U.S. domination.

The essay ends with the crescendo and flourish of a Marxian *Marseillaise*:

> The highest form of resistance is revolutionary war aimed at withdrawal from the world capitalist system . . . the revolutionary peoples have achieved a series of historic victories in Vietnam, China, Korea, Cuba, and Algeria. . . . There are even indications, especially in the Negro freedom movement in the South, in the uprisings of the urban ghettoes, and in the academic community's mounting protest against the war in Vietnam, that significant segments of the American people are ready to join an active struggle. . . . The drama of our time is the world revolution; it can never come to an end until it has encompassed the whole world.

The newly published *Monopoly Capital* had some ardent fans in the "Old Left" and even more detractors. The *Nation* ran a rave review by James O'Connor (June 20, 1966) who called the book "unique in its attempt to come to grips with the society's malaise in a systematic way, within the confines of a theoretical framework." For O'Connor, the authors shamed mainstream growth economists who based "*their* theories on certain *assumed* behavior on the part of 'ratio-

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nal' savers, investors and firms." Baran and Sweezy qualified for the "heavyweight division" of contemporary radical social scientists, according to O'Connor; the only other contenders were C. Wright Mills and William Appleman Williams.

O'Connor had but two quarrels with the analysis. First, he believed Baran and Sweezy underestimated the capacity of military spending to continue pumping up prosperity. Second, he didn't rule out the possibility of "thoroughgoing intercorporate planning" by elites in order to spend surplus to their advantage.

Harry Magdoff, who became Sweezy's coeditor on the magazine *Monthly Review* in 1968, assessed *Monopoly Capital* in the journal *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (October 1967). Magdoff, too, called the book "unique" and a contrast to conventional analysis, which "assumes an underlying harmony in a rational society." He cheered the chapters on the quality of life—until then "unrecognized territory for economists." He criticized only the vagueness of the Baran-Sweezy notion of surplus.

This last point—that the crucial term "surplus" was poorly defined—became the standard (and damning) complaint of social scientists about the book. The authors hadn't spelled out what counts as socially necessary costs of production; they hadn't differentiated between actual surplus and potential surplus from idle productive capacity; they hadn't adequately analyzed fiscal policy; they exaggerated obstacles to civilian government spending and underestimated the role of competition.

Meanwhile, *Monopoly Capital* got no applause from orthodox Marxists who couldn't swallow deviations from the creed. What happened—they wanted to know—to Marx's falling rate of profit, labor theory of value, and surplus value? Where was Lenin's theory of imperialism? And who says the industrial proletariat lost its franchise on the revolution to peasants in the third world? The fundamentalists proved Baran and Sweezy right on one point: many a Marxist had been sleeping on the job for a half century.

With a quarter century's hindsight, I'd say the most astute critiques of *Monopoly Capital* came from other parts of the left—for example, from Robert Heilbroner, writing in the *New York Review of Books* (May 25, 1966) and Henry Pachter in *Dissent* (May-June 1967). They disliked *Monopoly Capital*, and their words (especially Pachter's) were frequently harsh. Yet much of what offended them about the book was precisely what made the work appealing—or useful—to the New Left of the late 1960s. Reading what Heilbroner and Pachter wrote thirty years ago, one finds a guide to the connections between *Monopoly Capital* and the New Left.

Heilbroner called Baran and Sweezy's work "bitter and perhaps embittered" and "deeply flawed." Yet he would "strongly urge every non-Marxian economist in America to study this book as a test of his own beliefs." Why? Because "unlike most books we read, this one attacks prevailing beliefs at their roots."

Having advised his colleagues to study *Monopoly Capital*, Heilbroner predicted the book wouldn't persuade them for several reasons. First, the arguments were exaggerated and slipshod. "Every bit of available evidence is brought to bear against the system, but not a word is said in its defense. Nor are the charges scrutinized with anything like scholarly care." Second, Baran and Sweezy equated socialism and the Soviet Union, and "socialism is pictured as the very paradigm of sweet reason." Heilbroner found this outrageous after the Soviet obliteration of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. Third, Heilbroner questioned not only the hazy definition of surplus, but also the central claim that corporate profits tend to rise.

Finally, the book "treats the oligarchy as if it were a compact body of men who acted in concert with one will and one aim." For Heilbroner, this last distortion derived from "a fatal Marxian predilection for 'closed systems' of thought that can then proceed with a delicious inexorability to their assigned destinations." Baran and Sweezy—although mavericks in Marxism—knew exactly where the world was headed: more psychic malaise at home, more liberation abroad. Heilbroner wrote that he, too, hoped to see a more rational system replace U.S. capitalism; he, too, assumed third world nations needed revolutions. Yet he was "certain that the road to the future will not run as straight to heaven or hell as the one that Baran and Sweezy describe."

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Henry Pachter came down harder in *Dissent*. Like Heilbroner, he derided the notion of a monolithic oligarchy, found the definition of surplus contradictory as well as vague, and rated the scholarship sloppy ("not on a par even with their own earlier efforts"). Pachter rejected the assumption that political action against the "oligarchy" was impossible ("This crude, simplistic view is not mitigated by any mention of trade unions, pressure groups, pluralism, or the conflict character of social systems"). But worst for Pachter was the attempt to link the economic theory to problems such as the degradation of leisure, culture, marital relations, and sexuality: "I have seen similar complaints in the literature of the ages. . . .The connection with 'monopoly' just eludes me."

What, asked Pachter, could explain Baran and Sweezy's "deliberate economic primitivism"? His answer: "Maoist sociology."

> The conception of "surplus" makes sense only if it is understood as a theoretical underpinning of the colonial rebellion against white monopolistic domination in the world. Since both authors once knew better, one can only surmise that they constructed their economic model to suit their political creed.

Baran and Sweezy's economic theory is like a skyscraper perched on a shaky foundation. If the concept of expanding surplus doesn't hold up—and it doesn't—the edifice comes tumbling down. The critique of the "social order" gets buried in the rubble. Not only did the authors slap together a flimsy sociological analysis; they failed in their goal to link the sociology to the economics. All this looks obvious in 1997, but what did it look like to the New Left in the late 1960s?

I remember hearing in the late 1960s that a high school acquaintance of mine had jumped right onto the back of a police officer during a riot at the University of Wisconsin. I can picture this. I can also picture her going to a "mass meeting" for a student strike or smoking dope with friends and talking revolution or reading Monopoly Capital. *But I cannot imagine her reading Henry Pachter's review of the book. I doubt she knew that a magazine called* Dissent *existed.*

The history of the New Left—like the history of many intense social upheavals—can be divided into "major phases" lasting mere months or perhaps a year. So several "generations" and a host of changes were crammed into the space between, say, 1962 and 1968. Only six years—but at their conclusion, practically nothing in America looked or sounded the same, including "the movement." An early New Leftist might have experienced the "beloved community" of civil rights struggles in the South, the first SDS discussions of participatory democracy, or face-to-face debates with Old Leftists who were politically known quantities. At that point, the left still had a consecutive history.

Not so by the late 1960s. The late New Left included tens of thousands who jumped into whatever was happening at the moment—protests against the war in Vietnam, campus strife, community organizing, Black Power, third world liberation, people's parks, faction fights within SDS, embryonic sects. Some immersed themselves completely, others floated in and out, some watched from the periphery but identified with what they saw. Many had no "personal political history" prior to the New Left; many didn't know, or care, that the American left had a history. Threads linking political generations snapped.

Monopoly Capital made the rounds at the time of this late New Left and fit in comfortably. If the book had a wobbly economic foundation, the typical New Left reader never knew it. Those readers didn't encounter the book in courses taught by radical economists who presented a critical context for Marxism and underconsumption theory. Practically no such courses or teachers existed. Indeed, at the time of his death in 1964, Paul Baran was the only avowedly Marxist, fulltime professor of economics in the United States. The slew of radical economists who started teaching in the 1970s belonged to the New Left generation; many had begun their own training outside the classroom with works by Baran and Sweezy, including *Monopoly Capital*.

To the New Leftist, *Monopoly Capital* seemed to offer the only in-depth economic inquiry that systematically exposed the sham of "The Great American Celebration" of the postwar period. It tore the veil off crass materialism, spiritual bankruptcy, phony democracy, the myth of freedom, moral hypocrisy—a mega-*Peyton*

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Place with statistics and graphs. Unlike what one heard in school, *Monopoly Capital* explained poverty, military spending, the cold war, U.S. imperialism, the cooptation of the American working class, and the war in Vietnam. Here were Sigmund Freud, Paul Goodman, Herbert Marcuse, C. Wright Mills, Wilhelm Reich, David Riesman, plus an up-to-date American Marxism all rolled into one.

Not only did one package contain so much, the pieces inside fit together with precision. The Heilbroners and Pachters might mistrust such precision and point out faulty seams. But late New Leftists found the simplicity of the thesis compelling: monopoly produced surplus, surplus produced everything screwed-up in the world. It was an all-purpose handle on reality, a tidy model to account for a bewildering age. *Monopoly Capital* supplied a complete argument which could be assimilated and deployed in debate. No wonder the Tims of the Workers' League urged us all to memorize it.

As proselytizing Marxists, Baran and Sweezy did aspire to create a cohesive model that moved ineluctably to its destination: world revolution to overthrow "an evil and destructive system." Both the determinism and the destination suited the New Left, which had become increasingly Marxist by the late 1960s. *Monopoly Capital* appealed to radicals who wanted confirmation that history was on the side of revolution, and therefore the radicals were on the side of history. Baran and Sweezy's revolution arose from the third world. This, too, satisfied a New Left that looked ever more to the third world for inspiration.

Although the authors drafted *Monopoly Capital* in the 1950s and early 1960s, their work was fueled by the same mix of acrid desperation and stern triumphalism as the late New Left. Heilbroner was quite right: the present had not one redeeming feature for Baran and Sweezy; the future would bring complete redemption. Thousands of New Leftists reasoned the same way. When asked, "What will your revolution produce?" many answered, "Whatever it is, it will be better than the present." This Manichaean worldview was born of rage. In *Monopoly Capital*, the late New Left reader found an analysis that was adequately enraged.

Both Heilbroner and Pachter took particular offense at Baran and Sweezy's notion of a compact American oligarchy acting as a single agent; the critics claimed the authors knew better. But for overnight converts to Marxian revolutionary theory in the New Left, the notion of a monolithic ruling class made sense. The bad guys produced evil because their position in the class struggle dictated their actions. They all stood on the same side of the barricades. Class analysis—an indispensable tool for grappling with reality—was handled crudely by inexperienced New Leftists trying to relate napalm, Richard Nixon, the Black Panther party, and the killing of students at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard. Pachter's countervailing forces—unions, pressure groups, political pluralism, the normally conflictual character of society—looked completely coopted or hopelessly ineffective.

I was sitting in a bus caught in rush hour traffic on Chicago's Michigan Avenue when I saw the first newspaper photos of Soviet tanks rolling into Prague in August 1968. I remember feeling depressed, angry, horrified. A springtime of freedom replete with music and art as well as open debate and new government policies crushed under steel treads. Just eighteen months later, I read Monopoly Capital *for the first time and—as far as I recall—didn't bat an eyelid at Baran and Sweezy's rhapsody of praise for the Soviet Union.*

A library of interpretation already exists on the New Left, some of it examining attitudes toward the Soviet Union, China, and other murderous or dictatorial or authoritarian regimes. At this point, only hyperdefensive and terminally nostalgic New Left veterans deny that many radicals ignored or minimized the crimes of communist and third world revolutionary states. But how did it happen that yet another generation of professed lovers of liberty failed the test for moral consistency? Was it anger over Vietnam this time? Disillusionment with the heavy-handed myth of an uncorrupt United States? Search for an alternative model? Faulty assumptions such as "an enemy of the United States must be a friend" or "any regime calling itself left wing must be good"? General ignorance? Political

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naïveté? The human animal's historically proven capacity for self-deception and contradiction?

I'd say all of the above but argue they were combined in various proportions in different individuals at different times for the New Left. In his outstanding history *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, Todd Gitlin traces the evolution of "anti-anticommunism" among early New Leftists and their break with cold war liberalism. They strike me as a sophisticated group, reasoning through a position critical of both the Soviet Union and the United States in the aftermath of McCarthyism. Even those who disagreed with their thinking could acknowledge they had done some thinking.

By the late 1960s, a larger messier New Left was (mostly) anti-American and anticapitalist, not anti-anticommunist. *Monopoly Capital* engaged its New Left readers because it fairly screamed the same antagonisms. It also offered antidotes—socialism and anti-imperialist revolution—sketched hazily enough not to provoke many questions. Baran and Sweezy claimed they couldn't possibly analyze socialism or the communist bloc countries in depth in a short essay on the United States. So they defined socialism simply as a rational and planned system—the antithesis of capitalism. They described the Soviet Union simply as socialist and therefore rational and able to meet human needs—the antithesis of the United States. Third world nations were liberationist, struggling against both imperialism and capitalism—the adversary of U.S. world domination.

The result was a universe in which the good guys were well nigh perfect. No socialist government could conduct an aggressive foreign policy because "a socialist society contains no class or group which, like the big capitalists of the imperialist countries, stands to gain from a policy of subjugating other nations and peoples." The Soviet Union spent proportionately more on education than the United States so that "the American child at the end of the third grade is familiar with fewer than 1,500 words, the Soviet third-grade reader . . . works with approximately 8,000 words." And so on.

This celebration of a generic socialism, everywhere equal and equally dandy, satisfied New Leftists dipping into Marx, Lenin, and revolution for the first time. Radicals in the presectarian mode assimilated bits of history, pieces of theory—all of it carrying much the same value for a while. *Monopoly Capital* didn't incite partisan objections because it made no distinctions among existing communist regimes or among third world liberation movements. All the grass looked greener on the other side of the barricades.

The free floating didn't last. The sixties ended, the New Left fell apart. One large chunk blew off in a paroxysm of sectarian passions. The no-frills antiwar protester became a devotee of Mao or Fidel, sub-Saharan "state socialism" or Black Power, one or another neo-Leninist miniparty of the American working class or bomb-building terror. *Monopoly Capital* no longer spoke to these revolutionaries because it had no position on, say, the Albanian model or Kim Il Sung's Korea whereas the revolutionaries certainly did. Moreover, the revolutionaries didn't need anyone else's "literature" because they began producing their own in great volume. Finally, practically no one (aside from Communist party recruits) cared much for the Soviet Union as a paradigm.

Of course, many New Leftists bypassed the sectarian road or got off it quickly. Some turned right, but more went into teaching, social work, community organizing, trade unions, and legal services for the poor—the kind of reform efforts Baran and Sweezy deemed useless for changing the system. *Monopoly Capital* no longer served them or the young radical economists and sociologists who were soon doing more solid work of their own. A few years into the 1970s, *Monopoly Capital* had pretty much disappeared from the American scene—just like the New Left.

Only a small percentage of "best sellers" stand the test of time as texts still worth reading. *Monopoly Capital* fails on most counts. The analysis is glaringly superficial, the prose dry and repetitious, the verbal outrage exhausting. But the book does endure as an artifact—an object of human confection which, upon close examination, reveals much about the culture that used it. *Monopoly Capital* comes down to us as a piece of the New Left with its biases, values, emotions, and style still intact. □

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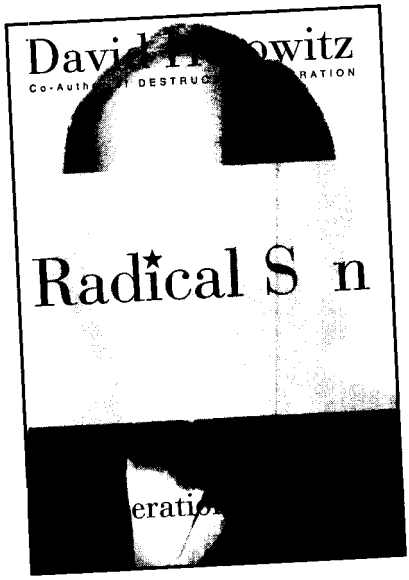
The First Great American Autobiography of This Generation.

—GEORGE GILDER, AUTHOR OF *WEALTH AND POVERTY*



"*Radical Son* is one of the best political memoirs I've ever read.

Though it is really a love story—one man becomes passionately enamored of freedom, responsibility, and reason. Or maybe it's a book about faith healing, a true account of how belief in human dignity and individual rights cures blindness, folly, and hatred. Anyway, everyone who was ever involved with or influenced by the New Left should read David Horowitz's words, and then eat their own. I think the last political book that affected me this strongly was Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*."

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"David Horowitz has written a vivid and compelling memoir

in which it's the life as it was really lived that matters, not just the politics. *Radical Son* may be 'a generational odyssey,' but it's also a work of literature."

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DAVID HOROWITZ is the bestselling co-author of *The Rockefellers* and *The Kennedys*, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and co-editor of *Heterodoxy*.

Published by The Free Press, *Radical Son* is available at local bookstores everywhere; or call 800-752-6562 to order copies.

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Peter Mandler

A POPULAR FRONT OF THE MIND?

"Center-Left" Journalism in Britain Today

Just under ten years ago, a group of socialist and liberal intellectuals in London, fed up with the left-wing splits that had given Margaret Thatcher a hammerlock on power with barely 40 percent of the vote, got together to produce a little magazine entitled *Samizdat*. Their goal was to try to break down the tribal divisions that had long separated the Labour and Liberal parties and gently to build up solidarity among anti-Conservative writers of all stripes—to construct what they called "a popular front of the mind." *Samizdat* did not last long, intellectuals being notoriously fissiparous (and poor). Subsequently, however, Tony Blair has achieved much the same end in the political sphere by mercilessly tugging Labour to the center and dropping the historic baggage—trade union links, nationalization, high-tax policies—that divided Labour from the Liberals. Did the intellectuals miss the boat? What does a brief survey of the intellectual left (or, to use the voguish phrase, "center-left") press reveal about the fate of the "popular front of the mind"?

First, of course, there are those sections of the left intelligentsia that never wanted to be part of a popular front. *New Left Review* continues to pump out its bimonthly ration of Marxist structuralism, if anything fortified by a purge of feminist and culturalist elements on its editorial board. Equally frosty about the popular front is *Red Pepper*, a monthly magazine of the green-red left, edited by Hilary Wainwright, who for twenty years has been trying to collect together the fragments deposited by the New Left of the 1960s. *Red Pepper* is one of the livelier products of Wainwright's Long March and when launched a few years ago gained brief notoriety by signing up some celebrity artists disenchanted with the moderating Labour party: the playwrights Trevor Griffiths and Harold Pinter, the suspense writer Ruth Rendell, the actress Julie Christie. It has a role to play as billboard for the host of single-issue activist groups, environmentalist and anti-corporate, that eschew party politics, but as yet it has shown no sign of gluing these fragments together into a force that impinges on the lives of millions, rather than hundreds. Calls for "fresh thinking" abound but only alongside familiar images of the Nicaraguan revolution and green feminists beating up fighter-jets with hammers.

That portion of the New Left that is tentatively interested in a popular front with Labour is represented by *Soundings*, a weighty tri-annual (not dissimilar to *Dissent* in appearance) inaugurated in fall 1995. Its editors include Stuart Hall, whose writings in the now-defunct *Marxism Today* in the 1980s first encouraged British socialists to take seriously the globalization of capital and culture, to see Thatcherism as a coherent right-wing expression of these trends, and to try to imagine a left-wing alternative that inhabited the same world. For *Soundings* Blair's Labour party is more an appropriation of than an alternative to Thatcherism, but at least *Soundings* and Blair live in the same universe—the one we all live in, where the left is struggling not because of betrayals or false consciousness but because of powerful economic and cultural forces (some of which we might even approve of).

Soundings has, however, had a bumpy start. Its preoccupations have too much reflected its founders' base in the cultural studies departments of grungy London universities: psychoanalysis, modern art, postmodern takes on popular culture. Articles on these subjects—like the poetry

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and avant-garde photography rather self-consciously mixed in—do not require hard political choices. Where those choices are required, *Soundings* has been something short of trailblazing. It complains of New Labour's lack of a "project" resting on "a particular institutional and social base," but its own ideas for a "project" remain blurry and unformed, and its cultural studies orientation is better suited to picking apart "institutional and social bases" than to building upon them. In any case, does *Soundings* imagine that the "institutional and social base" for a revived socialism really exists and is simply being ignored by the Blairites in an old-fashioned act of class betrayal? If so, what is that base? Reading the lead editorial in the Autumn 1996 issue, one is led to suspect that the base for which *Soundings* yearns is basically an Old Labour, which its editors never supported in their heyday, represented by trade union power and populist politicians like Harold Wilson, who should have lived to have seen himself called "creative" by his former adversaries on the New Left. On the other hand, this same issue is the best yet, with a well-grounded section on "the Public Good" carrying arresting proposals on health policy and pensions and a meaty article on globalization. (Still too many poems, though.)

With *Soundings* we have begun to approach popular front territory. Closer still is *Renewal*, a quarterly journal that has been circulating semi-invisibly among about one thousand subscribers for the last four years. Its roots lie in the Labour Coordinating Committee, roughly speaking that portion of the old Labour party left that has made its peace with Blair. *Renewal* sees its role as Blair's conscience; it goes along with his project of "modernizing" the Labour party but insists that modernization must mean more than simply ditching socialism. What is this "more"? That's one difficulty. *Renewal* has a genuine commitment to democracy and social justice, which it feels might just as well still be called "socialism," but it has no clearer idea than the rest of us how to translate those values into a twenty-first-century idiom.

More worrying, *Renewal* lacks weight. It has plenty of earnestness; it is packed full of bullet-points and bar charts; it wants painfully to contribute to the unfolding of Labour policy. It is working on building up contacts in the provinces—unusual in the London-centered political world—and an academic network called "Nexus." But given the size of the Labour movement and the proximity of a progressive government, the results of all these efforts are surprisingly thin. *Renewal* feels amateurish, under-resourced, marginal—a general staff without an army.

In contrast, the *New Statesman* nowadays feels professional, well-funded, and in the thick of things. Historically the flagship of left journalism in Britain, the *NS* had in recent years fallen on hard times. Under editor Steve Platt, and merged with the old social-policy weekly *New Society*, it had drifted into *Red Pepper*-land and struggled financially. Although it continued to carry some lively columns and a reasonable arts and books section, it shifted the focus of its political coverage from the mainstream to agitations such as direct action by hippies against new highway projects. Somehow symbolic was the fact that Platt not only published the letters of Keith Flett, a Trotskyist who writes obsessively to all organs of the British press, but engaged with him in a jokey dialogue in the editorial pages.

Recently, however, the *NS* has been bought up by Geoffrey Robinson, a former auto industry executive and Blairite Labour Member of Parliament. A dramatic transformation has been effected. The magazine is now slick and confident, packed with big-name writers, and pretty upper-crust in its appeal. Columnists gossip breathily about Blair's entourage, chat about governesses and holiday plans. Attempts are made to retain portions of the old audience—with angry voices like John Pilger and Alexander Cockburn staying on—but overall the magazine looks remarkably like the *Spectator*, the *Statesman*'s long-time right-wing rival, which in the Thatcher years made a name for itself with snobby, stylish, slashing prose. One positive consequence is that the quality of political writing and analysis is now much higher, if breezy and insiderish. Blairites, traditional Labourites, Liberals, and the odd open-minded Tory rub shoul-

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ders easily (perhaps because they were all at Oxford together). If this is the popular front, it's one with an unusual class base.

Which brings us naturally to *Prospect*, a new heavyweight monthly just ending its first year of publication. *Prospect* overlaps with the new *NS* in range, style, personnel (*NS* editor Ian Hargreaves is on its small editorial board) and to some extent in politics, but as befits a monthly (looking much like the old *Encounter*), its essays are longer, more thoughtful, more analytical, consciously countering the tabloidization of the rest of the press. *Prospect* has some of the *NS*'s cliqueyness, too—I suppose a new magazine must inevitably rely on the editor's friends at first—but it has a refreshing variety and iconoclasm, featuring a column on prison life written from within the walls and an unusual interest in the social impact of science. Avowedly nonpolitical, *Prospect* still lies pretty clearly in the terrain of the "popular front": accepting of markets yet concerned for community, for Europe, above all opposing the extreme neoliberalism and nationalism of the Thatcherites. Having accumulated a respectable circulation of twelve thousand in its first year, *Prospect* can probably aim higher, occupying as it does a unique marketing niche as a broad-based serious monthly.

With *Prospect* we have reached the best of British political journalism and, so far as it goes, the closest thing to *Samizdat*'s idea of a "popular front of the mind." Yet none of these magazines really points to the great intellectual renaissance that one might expect, or hope for, in a polity about to take a turn away from Thatcherism to a center-left government. Those magazines deriving from New Left roots remain in a familiar oppositional mode, mourning the loss of their movement and seemingly unaware that, if they can't force themselves on Labour by dint of numbers, they had better offer instead some pretty powerful and accessible ideas. The "popular front" magazines like the *NS* or *Prospect*, better situated politically, still seem all too often stale and familiar: London-based, Oxford and Cambridge-educated, written for and by the conventional intellectual upper middle class. It is as if this naturally centrist portion of the British intelligentsia had awakened from its Thatcherite episode and drifted back to a more comfortable liberalism, knowing power lies there, but not really knowing why or how. There is a deal of fine writing and elegant, essayistic hand-waving, but little conviction. The dirty details of social change and social policy remain largely terra incognita. There is not much sign even of the number-crunching sociology of the *American Prospect*. Nor is there anything like the revealing slice-of-life stories in which the *New Yorker* now specializes (ironically, under British auspices). That would be getting too close to the masses.

And yet, getting closer to the masses is probably the most constructive thing the political press could do to puncture the sterile cycle of image-making and image-breaking in which politicians and journalists nowadays conspire, and help fill the ideological vacuum inside Tony Blair's "New Labour." To start with, they could get out into the country and investigate a little more closely the condition of Britain. It is striking how completely absorbed in the publishing and political life of London these journals are—they behave like those hacks who reported the Nicaraguan revolution from the single four-star hotel in Managua. There is nothing written from or on major cities like Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, or—a city on the up—Newcastle. (Scotland has its own intellectual milieu and its own journals, increasingly nationalist.) It comes as something of a shock to bump up against a report, in *Renewal*, on the integration of South Asians into the Labour party in Blackburn, a former textile center north of Manchester now with one of the largest ethnic minority communities in the country.

Getting out into the country might not only redress the metropolitan imbalance; it could also interest the London intelligentsia in the lived experience of social change. Instead of airy articles on "national identity" (portrayed as a product of the London publishing houses) and "popular culture" (portrayed as a product of the London record companies), we might get inquests into family structure, crime on the streets, the education system, patterns of employment. *Prospect* and *Renewal* both sound off regularly—and rightly—on the need to reinvent "community" in conditions

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of globalization and economic decline. But "community" can't be reconstructed until the sources of its breakdown, its contemporary condition and variety, are properly anatomized.

Reflecting the British left's historic preoccupation with class, jobs and welfare are given more space than other social questions, although even here the subject is treated as one of macroeconomic policy—the minimum wage, levels of taxes and benefits. Job creation, training, investment, and retooling are looked down upon as drearily technical, though these are spheres that, unusually, Labour is pledged to spend money on in government. Extra-economic issues are more rarely discussed, though in actual fact class is as much a matter of culture as of economics. Britain has an unusually underachieving and underfunded public education system, out of which better-off families opt if they can afford to. Yet the only reform proposal that has been given an airing in the center-left press has been Tory M.P. George Walden's idea of reviving academic selection in public education to bring back the upper-middle classes—an idea that London-based journalists like because it will save them on school fees. Little attention has been devoted to those public schools that *do* work, with a view to generalizing their experience and developing a policy that would heal rather than institutionalize social division. Britain also has unusually high levels of crime against property (although low levels of crime against the person). Why? Is this a product of economic division or the culture of individualism or the fragmentation of communities? How might it be treated? Answer came there none. You'd think that even London academics and journalists had lost enough car radios by now to care.

A genuinely open-minded, investigative, and properly national perspective might also yield a bonus in the form of a renewed appreciation for local government. American journalists understand better than the British the limits to what central government can and should do. The British, partly due again to metropolitan bias, partly to a tradition of paternalist government, still feel all solutions must emanate from Parliament. This applies as much to the Tories as to Labour—Thatcher dismantled the metropolitan-area authorities (not only the Greater London Council) and her heirs have progressively reined in local councils' ability to set their own taxes. Labour now proposes to give some autonomy to Scotland (and possibly Wales) and in practice might loosen the constraints on councils. But it needs to be pushed to restore much more local freedom of action, to permit a wealth of social-policy experiments, to revitalize local democracy, and to tailor policy to diverse local conditions.

Much of this criticism boils down to a want of genuine democratic conviction in British intellectual life. The extremes and failures of Thatcherism have reunited politically large sections of the population, working class and middle class, without really bonding them. Intellectuals don't appear to *like* the rest of the population, or to understand them. (This gulf was widened by the tendency of the less well-educated parts of the middle class to vote Conservative in the eighties.) Even New Left academics seem to have only an aesthetic or anthropological appreciation of "the people." In this light, the journalistic moaning and gossiping about the machinations of Tony Blair's New Labour becomes comprehensible—writers don't much like Blair, but at least they do understand him. He's "one of us," to use Thatcher's famous phrase. Comforting as that may be, it's not the way a free press should think, much less a reform-minded press: it should be a mirror on society, not on itself.

The editor of *Prospect* says in his first anniversary issue that the magazine "gives voice to a liberal skepticism." "Skepticism," he insists, "is not rootlessness." Perhaps. But surely skepticism is the one intellectual commodity not in short supply nowadays. *Prospect* needs something to believe in. If it were possible to marry its savvy cleverness with *Renewal*'s hopefulness and policy-wonkery, then we might have a magazine that could contribute to rather than merely anticipate a revival of the "center-left." Sadly, such a marriage is impossible in Britain's airless intellectual world. This leaves the prospects for a rejuvenated social democracy to the tender mercies of Tony Blair, unassisted by a popular front of the mind. □

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Michael Bérubé

GREAT BOOKS AND GOOD INTENTIONS

GREAT BOOKS: MY ADVENTURES WITH HOMER, ROUSSEAU, WOOLF, AND OTHER INDESTRUCTIBLE WRITERS OF THE WESTERN WORLD, by David Denby. Simon and Schuster, 1996. 492 pp. $30.00.

Someone at Columbia University owes David Denby an honorary degree. As matters now stand, he's already received a B.A. from Columbia College, where, in 1961, he began his undergraduate career by taking Columbia's pair of required courses in Western literature and civilization—Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization (Lit Hum and C.C., for short). In the fall of 1991, at the age of forty-eight, Denby returned to Columbia to take those courses again, impelled partly by the 1990-1991 media frenzy over higher education and political correctness and partly by disgust at the machinery of media frenzy itself—"the sheer busyness of it all, the constant movement, the incredible activity and utter boredom." *Great Books* is a detailed chronicle of Denby's second immersion in the Western tradition, and though it would probably be too much to say that the West itself is richer for Denby's efforts, I doubt that Columbia could have asked for higher praise—or better advertising—for its core courses. Indeed, it seems likely that *Great Books* will eventually become, for any number of parents, students, and interested onlookers, a kind of layperson's Friendly Companion to the Classics—a perfect gift idea for the holidays or for the college-bound high school senior on graduation day.

To say this is not to slight Denby's achievement; he has written a thoughtful, engaging, and conscientious book, and I hope it wins a wide readership. If *Great Books* attracts more people to the pleasures and challenges of serious study in the humanities, Denby will have done us all a positive service—and whatever his intentions, he will also have made some complicated and contradictory contributions to the mass marketing of "high culture" in the United States.

To its credit, Denby's book opens with precisely this note of ambivalence. "Few people at Columbia," he writes,

> in 1961 or in the nineties, publicly called Lit Hum and C.C. "great books" courses, a term which smacked of leather-bound "sets" with gold-leaf edges and the hard sell of snobbish magazine and newspaper ads. The taint of consumerism and middlebrowism, as the college well knows, was never too far from lists of classics. The college tried to dispel that taint by the way it organized and taught the two courses.

Another reason no one at Columbia calls the courses "great books," of course, is that to do so would be to confuse one of Columbia's major marketing tools with that of the University of Chicago. The term "great books" is by now so closely associated with the Chicago program engineered by Robert Maynard Hutchins and promoted by Mortimer Adler's "Great Books" series that Adler should probably be receiving royalties anytime someone uses the term. And Adler's appeal on behalf of great books was nothing if not determinedly middlebrow. Somewhere in an honored place in my office files is a two-page ad from the *Saturday Review* of the early 1960s, depicting a vaguely ethnic-looking white male teenager leaning against a wrought-iron school fence. The ad insists that two out of five high school dropouts come from "good families," and that (although this cannot be guaranteed) you might be able to prevent such a disaster in your own home by providing your children with a steady diet of Great Books.

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Thankfully, neither Denby nor Columbia College makes such a claim for core courses. Denby does confess that he returned to college out of a sense of spiritual and intellectual frustration with mass media, and he does conclude that Western Civ was balm for his soul. But he does not offer the courses—or his own book—as acculturating devices that will keep kids in school (and keep their parents, the ones in good families, from losing caste). What then is the purpose of such courses, in Denby's rendering? Anyone who reads *Great Books*, I think, will emerge with the impression that core courses in Western Civilization can be extremely rewarding educational experiences—and that the Columbia professors who teach those courses (Denby's principal instructors were Edward Tayler, Anders Stephanson, and James Shapiro) are singularly dedicated, inspiring, and inventive. And anyone who reads *Great Books* will probably want to read more great books. But why should these courses be considered so central to a college curriculum, particularly for those vast numbers of undergraduates who have no interest whatsoever in studying the humanities?

The book does attempt to answer this question, but for the most part it does so on the cheap, by perpetuating and then "refuting" the usual caricatures of the academic left. Those caricatures are themselves partly the product of the media frenzy from which Denby sought escape, but in case you've forgotten that *tableau vivant*, it looks like this: every card-carrying member of the academic left uniformly despises core courses in Western Civ. We do so because (deep breath) the courses perpetuate white European male hegemony; they silence emergent voices and cultures, thereby preventing students from engaging with the Other; they impose a monolithic view of human history and traditions; they oppress minority students who are just gaining entrance to institutions of higher education; and they represent an arrogant imposition of dominant high-cultural values, a bald assertion of the premise (anathema to all academic leftists) that some books are better than others. Denby has little trouble debating these ludicrous straw positions, and for good measure, he throws in a few more, attributing to nameless "younger faculty" the belief that the *Iliad* should be tossed off the syllabus because "it was a poem that oppressed women and glorified war, and it had an infantile hero, and so on." (Door prizes will be awarded to the person who first identifies a Columbia professor, of any political stripe, who has actually said these things.)

What makes *Great Books* so strange in this respect is that Denby praises individual academic leftists warmly—and then, moments later, dismisses wholesale the kind of professor he's just praised. Here's a case in point. Early in the fall semester, seeking a radical reading of Aristotle, Denby sits in on Ti-Grace Atkinson's section of C.C., in which Atkinson describes and decries the historical influence of Aristotle's notions of public and private, his emphasis on order and hierarchy, and his beliefs about gender. In other words, Atkinson, like the good cultural leftist she is, reads Aristotle against the grain, not to cherish his every thought but to open him to skeptical scrutiny (in accord with the West's best traditions, one should add). This is the standard modus operandi of the cultural left, but oddly, Denby reacts as if Atkinson has accomplished something no cultural leftist has ever attempted: "There was," he concludes, "a very simple reason for feminists to read Aristotle: 'Know your enemy.' And how, I wondered, could the cultural left find fault with that?" The short answer, of course, is that we *don't*. Ti-Grace Atkinson doesn't, and neither do I. But the cultural right *does*: they call it "tearing down the intellectual foundations of the West." We call it "critical thinking" or, more simply still, "education."

I must admit, though, that the academic left too often earns its caricatures, and I know that there are some scholars—people I would normally consider political allies—who have regrettably divested themselves of disparaging and ridiculous remarks about Western Civ courses. For the record, the only such people Denby encounters are undergraduates—black female undergraduates, and a pitifully small number of them at that (I count two in the book). But perhaps this is a good time to clear the air, all the same. So here goes.

It is perfectly possible to be a member of the academic left in good standing and still be a sup-

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porter of core courses in some version of the Western canon, and I offer myself as living proof of the proposition. (It's crucial, though, that the courses Denby took in 1991-1992 were vastly different from the courses I took at Columbia in 1978-1980, and I'll return to this point.) It was never really legitimate for anyone, from William Bennett ("To Reclaim a Legacy") to Irving Howe ("The Value of the Canon"), to pretend that the academic left consists of a United Front to ban Homer, Plato, Augustine, and Hobbes and replace them with working-class Chicana poets and cross-dressing hip-hop superstars. But by the same measure, it was never legitimate for my colleagues on the academic left to pretend that Western Civ is the record of a tradition of domination, imperialism, and exploitation so potent that it can corrupt any undergraduate within a five-mile radius of the quad. Denby claims to have been inspired to write his book by a desire to dispel "the crudities and irrelevancies of the 'culture wars,' " so it's something of a shame that his book relies on them so often, even when the evidence is clear that Denby knows better.

It would be easy to point out, for instance, that over the course of the year, Denby comes to agree with almost every major anti-foundationalist point the academic left carries around in its quiver: upon reading Nietzsche, for instance, Denby writes, "Like Nietzsche—and like members of the academic left—I did not believe in metaphysical truth. . . . I did not believe that values existed outside of human practice. On the contrary, values would exist in whatever form we gave them." But to make this point would be to miss two seemingly minor points that are far more crucial to the book: one, that the standard faculty complaint about "great books" courses is much more pedestrian and practical than Denby usually admits, and two, that the Columbia curriculum underwent substantial revision in the 1980s precisely in response to challenges posed by the academic left (principally its feminist wing). To construe Columbia's current curriculum as a wholesale refutation of academic-left principles, then, requires some real strain—and plenty of caricatures.

Great Books is punctuated by "Interludes" in which Denby assesses the course in the light of the culture wars; the fifth interlude is given over to an interview with Siobhan Kilfeather, formerly the most vocal opponent of the course among Columbia's junior faculty (she now teaches at the University of Sussex). Kilfeather doesn't live up to the image of the canon-bashing radical: "many of her objections to Lit Hum, it turned out, were practical rather than ideological." The course, after all, is a broad survey, and takes students (of wildly disparate levels of preparation) through difficult texts at high speed. It's not just a tour bus—it's a tour bus driven by Sandra Bullock. To these standard complaints, Kilfeather adds two more: first, literature loses too much in translation, so that the reading list should be confined to works in English; second, the survey format prevents faculty from reading the works with due respect to the historical and social context in which they were written. "This is bad popularization," Kilfeather concludes, "you're taking things out of context. In literature, no argument is ever made in a vacuum. What happens is that students think over the most general aspects of the argument and make a vulgar paraphrase of it."

Kilfeather happens to be Oxbridge material, and it shows in her insistence that these courses are part of an "American mentality" of cultural "insecurity." (She wisely avoids the term "middlebrow.") But it's her emphasis on "context" that most irritates Denby. "This talk of context," he writes, "was an infuriating academic tic. . . . The notion of context was an academic rather than a literary or readerly demand." Perhaps so. Yet this seems an odd place for Denby to use "academic" in a derogatory sense (here it suggests both "pedantic" and "irrelevant"), because, after all, the books are being taught in a university, where it is normally considered legitimate to raise academic concerns about reading. What's more, Denby freely admits—a few pages later—that "context" is in fact indispensable for understanding what he reads: "C.C. was a text-based course—we jumped from masterpiece to masterpiece—but Stephanson firmly planted many of the books in their time and place. . . . I found myself grateful for these brief impromptu lectures on the changes in agriculture or weaponry in the sixteenth century and the military tech-

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niques of the Prussian Army in the eighteenth century." The context here has to do with Hobbes's *Leviathan*, for which Stephanson has prepared lectures on the differences between feudal society in England and on the continent, which help to account for the shape of early capitalism in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. You can read selections from *Leviathan* without that kind of knowledge, to be sure (I did it both in high school and at Columbia), but it's hard to imagine why anyone would object to "context" as a matter of principle.

This is not an academic quibble. If the course is supposed to give students some kind of grounding in the basics of Western intellectual history, it only makes sense to teach the books in a way that allows students to see *the books'* grounding in history. Kilfeather's objection to works in translation is valid but answerable: it is better to read Homer in translation than not at all. But her point about context, however overdrawn, bears directly on the educational mission of the liberal arts. Denby himself admits, at the outset of the book, that he didn't remember much about the courses he took thirty years ago. What then does he get out of the course this time around, reading the books as a much more mature and traveled version of himself? He begins the course very concerned about the constitution of civil society (fearing that the United States is coming apart at the seams), and understandably reads Plato, Hobbes, Hegel, et al. in that light. He thinks often, over the course of the year, of the time he was mugged, and he writes frequently—if querulously—about the gender turmoil wrought by feminism. Upon rereading *King Lear* he revisits, with agonizing honesty, his difficult relationship with his mother; upon rereading the Bible he begins by dismissing as "politically correct" those students who prefer to call the Old Testament "the Hebrew Scriptures," but gradually reverses himself, and wonders anew, upon reading the Gospels, at the West's long history of anti-Semitism. And he is bracingly self-critical throughout, always willing to interrogate his own earlier impressions, even when he's complaining about academic critics who use the verb "interrogate."

My sense is that Denby got a great deal out of his courses: he learned about the history of feminism (which was not on the syllabus in 1961), he read great writers whose poetry and prose ravished his soul, and he revisited—more seriously this time around—the intellectual tradition of the West. But what he got out of the books, he got by reading them in context—both in their historical context, and in his own.

And one of the (contextual) ironies here, as I've suggested above, is that Denby's courses were themselves the product of the "culture wars." In 1991-1992 Denby's reading lists included Sappho, Christine de Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, and even Catharine MacKinnon. Would it be insufferably P.C. of me to point out that *not a single one of these women*, not even Austen, was on the C.C. or Lit Hum syllabus when I was an undergraduate way back in the final days of the Carter administration? Denby has his moments of magnanimity, when he ascends from caricature and admits that the academic left has reformed and enriched Columbia's core courses instead of calling for their abolition. But that magnanimity comes at a price—as when Denby showers praise on Virginia Woolf, acknowledging her earlier neglect, but then turns with fury on (of all people) the academic feminists who helped to establish Woolf's reputation. Of Woolf's entry into the circle of great writers, writes Denby:

> It was a famous victory, and in gratitude to the feminist critics, who were mainly responsible, I have tried to ignore the women in the universities who were using and misusing Woolf, claiming the most private of artists as a public possession. . . . Though she disliked the word itself, Virginia Woolf was most assuredly a feminist. But to reduce her immense, varied output to a variety of current-day feminist agendas, and to marshal her iridescent metaphors as dull-edged weapons in the struggles for turf within the university, is to engage in exploitation, expropriation, and slander. If Woolf were now brought into contact with some of her academic champions, there would follow an explosion of scorn without parallel in English literature. Anyone who reads her carefully could prove as much.

This is an absurd passage, a kind of hyperbolic fantasy version of the Marshall McLuhan scene in *Annie Hall*, and its vituperative tone is a real

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blemish on an otherwise generous and capacious book. But it's indicative of something disappointing about *Great Books*: Denby signed up for the course out of a sense of frustration with the "crudities" of the culture wars, but by the end of his year of study, despite his sincere appreciation of the women writers added to the course list in 1986 (thanks entirely to the efforts of feminists), he was still sufficiently under the sway of those culture-war crudities to pose as a Paglian defender of Virginia Woolf against the legions of her academic-feminist exploiters and slanderers.

The question of canon revision, in turn, bears directly on the question of what purpose the core courses might serve. In one of his attacks on "canon-bashing critics," Denby asks, "Does anyone seriously imagine we will achieve social justice in America by reading bad or second- or third-level books and by ignoring great ones? (We will not attain it by reading great work either, but at least we will not be confused about what we are doing.)" That's an interesting parenthesis, not only because it begs the question of what we *are* doing by reading great work, but also because it undercuts one of the book's principal conclusions, which appears a scant ten pages later: "I agree with William Bennett and other traditionalists to this extent: Men and women educated in the Western tradition will have the best possible shot at the daunting task of reinventing morality and community in a republic now badly tattered by fear and mistrust." I'd like to believe this, and not merely because it would mean that I myself would be qualified to reinvent the country, but as matters stand I'm afraid it only leaves me confused about what we're doing in the humanities. How can great books impel their readers to reinvent morality and community but not to pursue social justice? What if (some, many, most) great books do all these things—or none?

Earlier in his narrative, while reading the Old Testament and disentangling it from its latter-day popularizations and corruptions, Denby had hit upon a better rationale for Western Civ: for the students who had never read the Bible closely (or Hegel, or Wollstonecraft), "the core- curriculum courses amounted to remedial work on their own existence." Why might this not be a sufficient reason for any course in the intellectual history of the world, whether West, East, North, or South? Why not say simply that people who hope to think seriously about their place in that world have a positive obligation to verse themselves in the history of human thought and achievement, and that at this time, in this country, Plato-to-the-present courses in "Western thought" are as good a place as any (and better than most) to start? Perhaps this is not as effective a tactic as claiming that the course will prepare you to become one of Tomorrow's Leaders, but still, I'd like to propose that it's worth a shot anyway.

Great Books has more to recommend it than I've suggested here. Denby is a fine journalist, and renders a vivid sense of the *gestalt* experience of his courses: grappling with each writer's prose (Denby writes particularly well on this), taking a final exam, watching volatile or testy classroom discussions, trying to concentrate on

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great books amid jackhammers and fire engines, attempting to guest-teach *Pride and Prejudice*. For all that I might find vexing about it, *Great Books* has plenty of what they call (in the culture biz) "selling points." I'm not even slightly ambivalent about that aspect of the book: everyone in the academy these days knows that the humanities need a good market-and-promotion strategy, since core courses *don't* actually qualify their students to run the country, and Denby has come up with one of the best humanities-promotion strategies I can think of. That makes *Great Books* a great gift idea—but it also makes it an edifying book, a contradictory but serious and sometimes moving testimony to the power of great books to instruct and delight. □

Amy Swerdlow

PLAYING THE MOTHER CARD FOR FASCISM

WOMEN OF THE FAR RIGHT: THE MOTHERS' MOVEMENT AND WORLD WAR II, by Glen Jeansonne. University of Chicago Press, 1996. 264 pp. $29.95.

Glen Jeansonne's investigation of the "America First" mothers' movement, a massive network of ultraright isolationist women's organizations that flourished in the Midwest and on both coasts from 1939 until the bombing of Pearl Harbor, is an informative and often shocking book. It is also a welcome corrective to the popular notion that almost everyone in the United States supported "the good fight," and to the tendency in women's peace studies to assume that female peace protest is always on the side of the angels.

Male right-wing isolationists of the 1930s, led by Father Coughlin and Gerald K. Smith, have received a good deal of study, and women's peace history has become a rapidly growing enterprise. We have had monographs and articles on the Women's Peace party of 1915, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's Peace Union, founded in 1921, and Women Strike for Peace, but female peace activism of the right has remained largely unexamined. Consequently feminist theorists who postulate a special relationship of women, mothers in particular, to antimilitarism have given insufficient consideration to women's peace protest from the right, and to militarist women who support what liberals and leftists consider unjust or imperialist wars.

The America First mothers' movement (not to be confused with the America First Committee, which women supported in large numbers throughout the 1930s) did not surface as a separate women's organization until the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the beginning of World War II. From its beginnings as the National Legion of Mothers (NLM) in Los Angeles, it grew rapidly to include some fifty to one hundred groups. The movement peaked in early 1941 in the fight to defeat the Lend Lease Bill, which allowed Britain to purchase arms on credit from the United States. The major goals of the movement, according to its own literature, were to keep America out of the war in Europe by maintaining strict U.S. neutrality, bring down President Roosevelt and the New Deal, destroy communists and labor unions, and end Jewish control over the economy, the government, and the media.

The America First mothers were energetic, militant, creative, and independent of the men's movement. They testified before Congress, picketed the White House, unrolled banners in the

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Senate Gallery, "sat-in" outside the offices of members of Congress who refused to see them, circulated petitions, ran mass meetings and marches, and participated in political campaigns. (It is interesting to note that although veterans of the 1960s peace movement believe, with chagrin, that they invented many of the tactics that were later adopted by the right-to-life movement, *Women of the Right* makes clear that the right-to-life movement already had its own models in the America First mothers movement of the later 1930s and 1940s.)

It is impossible to assess the total following of the America First mothers' movement because the movement chose to forgo membership lists. Jeansonne believes that there may have been as many as five to six million women involved. His estimate seems inflated to me. Having been a student peace activist in the late 1930s and a full-time activist in Women Strike for Peace in the 1960s, I know how hard it is to move millions of women, or even numbers large enough to appear to be millions. However, if only one million were actively involved in the America First mothers' movement, that is still an enormous accomplishment. It indicates that several millions more could have been "fellow travelers"—petition signers, letter writers to elected officials and the local press, one-time participants in meetings or marches, or financial contributors. The movement was obviously not just a small group of "loonies" or "little old ladies in tennis shoes," as they used to be called in the bad old sexist and ageist days. In their opposition to U.S. involvement in a second World War only twenty years after the first, the mothers' movement evidently hit a responsive chord among a large constituency of conservative women.

The America First women, who were white, middle class for the most part, and middle-aged, organized self-consciously under the banner of motherhood. They stated openly that they based their isolationist rhetoric on maternal arguments in order to attract the average patriotic woman seeking to protect her son.

Playing the "mother card," or justifying women's political activity in the name of motherhood and family protection, goes back to the postrevolutionary period, when the concept of republican motherhood was used by women, and sympathetic men, to justify the fight for women's education. In the early nineteenth century, abolitionist women justified their "sallying forth" from home to circulate antislavery petitions on the grounds that they were protecting the chastity and sanctity of the slaves' and slaveowners' families. In the 1880s and 1890s the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), campaigning under the banner of God, Family, and Native Land, described itself as "organized mother love." Frances Willard, the leader of the movement, who was also a suffragist and flirted with socialism, was fond of saying that the WCTU was "like having a score of mothers for every boy." And in 1915, the professional women who organized the Women's Peace Party, most of whom were not biological mothers, identified themselves as "the mother half of humanity" and the "custodians of life of the ages" to support their demand that women be given "a share in deciding between war and peace in all the courts of high debate—within the home, the school, the church, the industrial order, and the state."

It was in this tradition that the California women active in the National Legion of Mothers claimed that they were fighting for their boys. "It is too much trouble to bring him up into the world to have him fight in the battles of foreign nations," one of the organizers, who had come to witness the opening of the NLM headquarters told a reporter from the *Los Angeles Herald Express*. Another declared, "It would be a disgrace to women, she 'who are nailed in agony to the cross to give life,' if they cannot, do not, as an army of mothers, keep the country out of war. . . ."

It should be noted that men can also resort to the "mother racket," as feminist critics of maternalist politics call it. Last year the *New York Times* reported that vice-presidential candidate Jack Kemp, in an attempt to narrow the gender gap favoring President Clinton, told two hundred women at a Jewish Center in Tucson, Arizona that a Dole administration would apply the type of diplomacy that a mother would love and "not bomb Baghdad without talking to someone."

For many women, however, maternal political rhetoric is more than a ploy. It is a felt response, generated by gender socialization, maternal work, by women's status at a particular

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historical moment, and by class and race. Its political direction, however, is always dictated by the women's received ideology—their religious beliefs and worldview.

An earlier examination of the America First mothers by Laura McEnaney, published in *Diplomatic History* in 1994, argues that the rank and file were conservative Christian women, anxiously defending the traditional nuclear family, orthodox gender roles, and Christianity itself. Jeansonne adamantly rejects this analysis. He regards the America First mothers not as conservatives, but as extremists, bigots, and reactionaries. He devotes a major portion of the book to the leaders' rhetoric and the movement's literature, demonstrating that the mothers were viciously anti-Semitic and that many were supporters of Nazi Germany.

Slanders and slurs against Jews by the leaders of the America First mothers' movement were both fanciful and vicious. Lyrl Clark Van Hyning, leader of the largest and most active mothers' organization, the Chicago-based *We the Mothers* Mobilize for America, charged that Jews had caused not only World War I but the Civil War and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Elizabeth Dilling, a self-styled "Tory super-patriot," author of *The Red Network: A Who's Who and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots*, even extended her paranoia to the Republican candidates for the presidency. She accused Thomas Dewey of hiding the fact that he was Jewish and that he'd been a cantor in a synagogue. Opposing Eisenhower for President in 1950, she coined the slogan "Ike the Kike is the Candidate of the Jews."

We the Mothers maintained in its literature that Jewish money had financed the Russian revolution, and that most refugees from Nazism were communists. The Molly Pitcher Rifle Legion, an America First mothers' group, urged women to "Buy Christian, Vote Christian, Employ Christian, and Boycott all Sponsors of the English Jew-controlled radio." The Molly Pitchers also professed that "no Jew is a true American." Both their nativism and their racism were demonstrated in their warning that Mexicans might soon invade the United States and join with Southern blacks to end white supremacy. Solutions to the Jewish problem discussed by leaders of the mothers movement ranged from sterilization to mass murder.

What may seem paradoxical to some is that the leaders of the America First mothers were also strong supporters of women's political rights. In April 1941, the isolationist Cathrine Curtis circulated a "Mothers Day Petition" against involvement in the war, which declared that men had no right to destroy life without the consent of women, and that war resulted from failure to include women in the peace process. This is a feminist argument that has been made by progressive women's peace organizations since the last half of the nineteenth century. (It was proclaimed again in 1995 by the thirty thousand women from nongovernmental organizations who gathered at the Fourth International UN Decade of Women Conference in Beijing.)

Jeansonne relies on the most highly regarded works in feminist history and theory to answer the question he poses: whether or not the America First women were feminists. He concludes that "Understanding that the mothers were not femi-

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nists is as important as understanding that the mothers were not political conservatives." Unfortunately, he has not integrated feminist understandings sufficiently to see that there is no such thing as an inflexible party line for feminism. I would not dismiss the America First mothers' feminist credentials so completely. Although the women did not challenge capitalist patriarchy, their insistence on women's political power, their creation of separatist organizations led exclusively by women, and their demonstration of female solidarity in fighting for their cause entitles them at least to the status of "protofascist protofeminists." The fact is that the leaders of the American First mothers' movement possessed many attributes of "bourgeois feminism," in the parlance of 1970s Marxist feminism. The mothers demanded political equality with the men of their race and class, but insisted on preserving their privileges of race and class. They wanted to replace the men then in power with men who shared their values and prejudices, and with whom they could share rights, privileges, and power.

Jeansonne concludes that although the mothers forged a mass movement and energized the crusade against U.S. intervention in World War II, they failed to meet their goals because they did not disable the body politic. Using the Vietnam antiwar movement as his measure of success, he points out that the women never blocked a troop train, obstructed the draft, or seriously jeopardized the war effort. Yet he acknowledges that by involving women in right-wing activism, the movement strengthened the right in numbers and influence and thus helped to create the conditions that led to McCarthyism. This I would rate as an important step toward their goal of an anticommunist, antilabor, and anti-New Deal America.

The author reveals his own male biases and sentimental assumptions regarding motherhood when he charges that the women's tactics and objectives "contradicted their maternal values and reinforced the stereotype that women are hysterical." He must know from his own previous books on Gerald Smith and Huey Long that these women were no more hysterical than their male counterparts. In fact one of the flaws in the book is the absence of a comparative framework. I would have liked to have seen the women's groups compared with the male-led right-wing organizations and the left-leaning pacifist women's organizations of the same period. It would have been worthwhile to attempt an explanation of their contrasting worldviews.

The most important question this book raises but fails to answer in sufficient depth is: "What made these women such fierce anti-Semites?" It is true that in the Midwest many were of German origin and followed the leadership of Germany in both their Anglophobia and their hatred of Jews. But the majority of the women were not of German origin, and most were Protestants, so they were not blindly following Father Coughlin. Jeansonne tells us that to understand such fervent racists and anti-Semites as the leaders of the America First mothers' movement we must comprehend the role of anxiety and paranoia in their lives. Among bigots, he explains, obsessive anxieties can be assuaged most simply by scapegoating. Bigots cling to their biases tenaciously, regardless of the opposition, because dogmas provide security.

It would have deepened our understanding of the America First mothers' movement and the problems we face today with militant racists and anti-Semites if Jeansonne had placed the America First women in a continuum from their populist foremothers to contemporary nationalist/nativist/racist/movements. The America First mothers exhibited many of the features of other paranoid political movements. Sensing their status, security, and identity assaulted, the mothers chose to view complex social, economic, and political events as the result of conspiracies by evil "others." Nativism—the unifying ideology of the America First mothers—tends to raise ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural differences into ultimate, non-negotiable oppositions.

Understanding and empathizing with the fear and rage of the fanatical nativists, loathsome as that may be, is an essential step toward developing strategies for bridging explosive differences without sacrificing the rights of minorities and the poor. Jeansonne opens up a piece of history about which we have known too little and need to know more. □

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George Scialabba

PARTISAN RESPONSIBILITIES

A PARTISAN CENTURY: POLITICAL WRITINGS FROM *PARTISAN REVIEW*, edited by Edith Kurzweil. Columbia University Press, 1996. 409 pp. $49.00, cloth; $19.50, paper.

The first two *Partisan Review* anthologies, published in 1946 and 1953 and now out of print, were of an almost unbelievable richness. The contributors whose names began with "A" were Lionel Abel, James Agee, Conrad Aiken, Sherwood Anderson, Hannah Arendt, W.H. Auden, and Erich Auerbach. Those whose names began with "B" included Isaac Babel, James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, John Berryman, Elizabeth Bishop, R.P. Blackmur, Louise Bogan, Paul Bowles, and James Burnham. . . . You get the idea. *Writers and Partisans: A Partisan Review Reader*, published in 1983 and also out of print, was slenderer but still distinguished, with essays by Arendt, Daniel Bell, Albert Camus, Nicola Chiaromonte, Irving Howe, Arthur Koestler, Dwight Macdonald, Czeslaw Milosz, Susan Sontag, Stephen Spender, and Leon Trotsky, among others. The book-length fiftieth-anniversary edition (1984) was a grand family reunion, with contributions from eminent members of every *Partisan* generation.

A hard act to follow. But then, *A Partisan Century* isn't really meant to be definitive, or even representative. There is no poetry, fiction, or literary criticism, and except for Sontag's "Notes on Camp" and two or three other pieces, no cultural commentary of the kind whose breadth, verve, and authority made the magazine famous. The new anthology is designed, rather, to answer the question: What have *Partisan Review*'s politics been during its sixty years?

The short answer is: liberal anticommunism. True, the magazine started out well to the left of liberalism. (An "Editorial Statement" in the inaugural issue announced, a trifle solemnly: "*Partisan Review* is aware of its responsibility to the revolutionary movement.") And on the other hand, in recent years its liberalism has largely consisted of infrequent digs at neoconservatism, whose proponents nonetheless seem very much at home in *Partisan*'s pages. For the most part, though, "liberal anticommunism" will do. Politically, the magazine has majored in criticizing America's critics, with a minor in criticizing America.

A reasonable choice, I hasten to add—someone had to keep left-wing intellectuals honest (or try). And *Partisan* was, after all, primarily a literary magazine, not a policy review or a newsmagazine or even a journal of political opinion. Investigative journalism, programmatic advocacy, and scholarly research were not its bailiwick. Its specialty was generality: its purpose was to make overall sense of facts and judge the quality of arguments; to penetrate ambiguities, disclose incongruities, and highlight ironies; to leaven political debate with that famous sense of variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty. Culturally, they were players; politically, they were kibitzers. That was why Dwight Macdonald left in 1943 to start *politics*, which (like *Dissent* a decade later) was everything *Partisan Review* ought to have been—if it had been a political magazine.

The kibitzing was, however, abundant and, at least as represented in *A Partisan Century*, generally of high quality. André Gide's "Second Thoughts on the USSR" (1937) is still inspiring and Trotsky's "Art and Politics" (1938) still provoking. George Orwell's "London Letter" and Chiaromonte's "Paris Letters" evoke the cosmopolitan though beleaguered intellectual camaraderie of the 1940s. The celebrated polemics can

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still get one's juices flowing: for example, Macdonald and Clement Greenberg's "Ten Propositions on the War" (1941), urging non-support for Roosevelt and Churchill, with Philip Rahv's caustic reply; and William Barrett's "The Liberal Fifth Column" (1946), a slashing attack on the pro-Soviet apologetics of that era's *Nation* and *New Republic*. Diana Trilling's "The Oppenheimer Case" (1954), a close reading of the transcript of Oppenheimer's loyalty hearings, shows that the interpretive subtleties of lawyers are child's play compared with those of a skilled literary critic. James Baldwin's "A Letter from the South" (1959) shows that the same relation holds between the descriptive powers of journalists and those of novelists. And among the anthology's unexpected pleasures are these still eloquent avowals by the young Norman Podhoretz from a symposium, "The Cold War and the West" (1962):

> I don't believe for a moment that "the intellectual values and freedoms and the political and civil liberties we all affirm" are inseparable from the particular complex of political and economic institutions that now exist in the West. On the contrary, I would even go so far as to say that certain of these institutions are positively hostile to the values and freedoms they purport to serve. . . . What we need—and what until very recently the extraordinary willingness of intellectuals to think about everything in cold-war terms (which means precisely thinking in terms of the assumption that there is a rough identity between the institutions of American society and the values "we all affirm") has deprived us of—is an energetic and unremitting effort to keep a vision of the good society alive and to judge existing institutions as they actually function by the extent to which they further that vision. Let me point out that a commitment to such visionary ideals, no matter how utopian they may seem, is the best conceivable safeguard against being taken in by the lies of politicians and ideologues, West and East . . . . To me, the most hopeful development in years is the recent appearance of a body of utopian social criticism based on a very clear vision of what a decent life on this planet might look like and full of concrete ideas which, if they have little chance of being put into immediate effect, at least serve to refresh and nourish our fading sense of what the liberal-radical tradition has always stood for and how far short we still are of achieving it. The priests are forever distorting the prophets. . . . And the only remedy is for the prophets to say them nay and remind them of what the Lord really demands of man.

Podhoretz may have been gently chiding his editors; "utopian social criticism" was never *Partisan Review*'s long suit. And now that the cold war is over, the journal's fierce anticommunism has been succeeded by a slightly mellower anti-utopianism, represented in *A Partisan Century* by Ralf Dahrendorf's "No Third Way" (1990) and Jeffrey Herf's "The Polish Spring" (1990). Both, interestingly, are addressed to Central European student audiences, Herf's an address, Dahrendorf's an open letter. Herf, earnest and fraternal, speaks for "deradicalized" American New Leftists; Dahrendorf, wry and avuncular, for disillusioned West European social democrats. Both essays counsel patience, moderation, pragmatism, avoidance of rancor, eschewal of "system thinking," and recognition of the political-economic law of gravity: capitalism is associated with freedom; socialism with unfreedom. Both essays, closely reasoned and attractively written, are eminently worth reading and arguing with.

One might begin the argument with Herf's observation: "Why [are] some nations richer than others? The short and simple answer is that where governments allow markets, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster private investment decisions and the free movement of labor, economic growth takes place. Where, on the other hand, government bureaucrats have tried to plan economies, discourage entrepreneurship, concentrate investment decisions in the state, and prevent the free movement of labor, economic growth does not take place. The phenomenal economic successes of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong have been a huge embarrassment for [radical critics of capitalism]." But South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and now China have done plenty of planning, discouraging, concentrating, and preventing. And although American economic policy in 1929 (and 1893 and 1873) corresponded pretty closely to Herf's recommendations, economic growth did not take place. Perhaps Herf's "short and simple answer" needs some leftist qualifications, after all. Like-

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wise Dahrendorf's dictum: "Whoever sets out to implement Utopian plans will in the first instance have to wipe clean the canvas on which the real world is painted. This is a brutal process of destruction." This statement rules out the possibility that utopian plans might be implemented, or at any rate pursued, democratically. Of course—as the young Podhoretz might have pointed out—a democratic utopian movement will have to be preceded by decades or even generations of "utopian social criticism."

According to the memoirists, William Phillips did most of the work around the magazine and held together the *Partisan* circle. But Philip Rahv seems to have been its presiding spirit, at least during its first two decades; and Rahv's "The Sense and Nonsense of Whittaker Chambers" (1952) is a quintessential *Partisan Review* essay. Chambers's monumental *Witness* activated all Rahv's critical powers: literary, philosophical, historical, and political. In authoritative accents he confirms Chambers's indictment of the Popular Front mind, corrects his account of the New Deal, dismisses his antipolitical mysticism and antirationalist metaphysics, and portrays Chambers's curious sensibility as "Dostoevskyean in essence," exhibiting "that peculiar note of personal intensity and spiritual truculence, of commitment to the 'Idea' so absolute as to suggest that life has no meaning apart from it, all oddly combined with a flair for mystification and melodrama." The employment, in this fashion, of literary resources to interpret historical and political experience was the characteristic move of the New York Intellectuals. (Likewise, of course, of European intellectuals such as Silone, Chiaromonte, Camus, and Orwell.) The resulting critical gravity, nuance, and flair are uncommon nowadays. Also uncommon are ideologically discriminating judgments like the following, which make one regret that Rahv did not live long enough to turn his polemical scorn on contemporary conservative superficialities:

> [Chambers] reproaches Western civilization for its "three centuries of rationalism." Now rationalism has its fallacies, to be sure, but is it fair to hold it to account for the horrors of the Russian police state, which has behind it not even one, much less three, centuries of rationalism? Soviet society bears the indelible stamp of the long Russian past of feudal-bureaucratic rule, an absolutist rule of the mind as of the body. Of course, the Marxist teaching is not exempt from censure for the consequences of the Revolution. It should be added, however, that this teaching, Western in its main origins and holding a heavy charge of Judaeo-Christian ethics, has suffered a strange metamorphosis in its Muscovite captivity. And now, in its movement deeper into the East, it is seized upon, with all the fervor of native absolutism, by the backward, semi-mendicant intelligentsia of the Asian countries. This intelligentsia, untrained in habits of social responsibility and unformed in the traditions of humanist and rationalist thought, has converted Marxism into a dogma of nothing less than incendiary content. Its detachment from the West is virtually complete.

Rahv is (along with Delmore Schwartz) the protagonist of William Barrett's *The Truants*, the best of the many books about the *Partisan* circle. It may not be the most accurate or complete account, but it's the most literate, and its verdict on the whole enterprise—conveyed by the book's title—cuts deepest. With none of the rancor that commonly disfigures such criticism, with affection even, Barrett rebukes his younger self and his former comrades for intellectual irresponsibility and bad faith. Infatuated by seemingly "original and sweeping ideas," he writes, the contemporary American radical is prone to "conveniently forget the humbling conditions of his own existence"; in particular, that "his own continued existence as a dissenter depends on the survival of the United States as a free nation in a world going increasingly totalitarian." Like the makers of the French Revolution—those prototypical modern truants—the *Partisan* crowd were "literary intellectuals" who "loved large and sweeping abstractions," which blur ineradicable differences and intractable conflicts, thus making possible "the first step toward Gulag." Their radical skepticism led them—most poignantly the tough-minded Rahv, Barrett claims—into a terrifying nihilism, which they could only escape through unquestioning faith in a socialist utopia. Wilfully, desperately, they blinded themselves to the most humbling and fundamental of moral facts, that "the truth about human nature . . . is very bad news for socialism."

No one should reject this diagnosis out of

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hand, at least when made as urbanely and charitably as it is in *The Truants*. But as Rahv would surely have pointed out, Barrett, like nearly all other religious critics of modernity, offers only warnings about skepticism, never reasons for belief. And as for Barrett's suggestion that totalitarianism in other countries renders searching criticism of one's own country frivolous, or that dissent somehow implies indifference to "the survival of the United States as a free nation"—this is itself frivolous.

If the *Partisan Review* intellectuals are to be faulted, it must be for something homelier than nihilism or unpatriotism. It seems to me their moral imagination was simply a little stunted by their self-importance. "A generation of anticommunists wasted its talents in obsessive polemics," William Phillips lamented in *A Partisan View* (his own memoir, written partly in response to Barrett's). Not really wasted, of course; anticommunist polemics were a noble and necessary work. But there is a grain of truth in Phillips's remark, and it betokens a moral failing as much as a strategic misjudgment.

For it does appear, in hindsight, that liberal anticommunists might perhaps have spared just a little of the time they spent denouncing Stalinism and even Nazism—to which, after all, most American citizens and policy makers were already strongly opposed—in order to decry some equally catastrophic evils, about which their compatriots were almost wholly ignorant or unconcerned. I mean the miseries of backwardness, which have killed even more human beings in this century than the Holocaust and the Gulag. But the absence of clean water and mosquito netting, however deadly, do not offer the same rich opportunities for ideological virtuosity and polemical display as political mass murder, which may be why they have commanded little attention among intellectuals in New York or elsewhere. Occasional *Partisan Review* editorials on this subject would not, of course, have had much effect on the perennial suffering of the invisible poor. But they would have placed the magazine's reputation for intellectual and moral seriousness on an even firmer footing than the contents—impressive enough—of *A Partisan Century*. □

Steven Lukes

IN CIRCLES

THE PERMANENCE OF THE POLITICAL: A DEMOCRATIC CRITIQUE OF THE RADICAL IMPULSE TO TRANSCEND POLITICS, by Joseph Schwartz. Princeton University Press, 1995. 352 pp. $39.50.

E.M. Forster introduces his *Aspects of the Novel* by proposing that "we are to visualize the English novelists . . . as seated together in a room, a circular room . . . all writing their novels simultaneously." Likewise, Joseph Schwartz summons up theorists of what he calls the "radical" tradition: five principals—Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and Arendt—surrounded by a penumbra of contemporary scribblers, all political theorists, all North American, and many engaged in the so-called "liberal-communitarian" debate. His purpose is to pinpoint a central flaw in the "overly canonical radical theoretical tradition" (he means, of course, the radical left), namely a hostility to "the very conditions that give rise to democratic politics—a plurality of social interests and diverse conceptions of the good life." Beyond the penumbra is a select outer circle of contemporary political theorists who see what the world outside the circular room requires, openly embracing "social pluralism" and a relatively autonomous civil society but also liberalism's commitment to individual liberties and rights. Schwartz here focuses upon what he

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calls the "post-political visions" of those in the center, which, he claims, have unduly influenced those in the penumbra. (Indeed, Hegel, not usually thought of as a radical in Schwartz's sense, is there only because of his influence.) Schwartz locates himself in the outer circle, but he offers no more than a glimpse, in an all-too-brief concluding chapter, of its occupants' potential contribution to the world outside: namely to reconstruct "a radical democratic theory of politics in a feasible society more democratic and egalitarian than our own." They are said to strive to achieve "the political goals of the Enlightenment minus its metaphysical trimmings"; they seek a "renewed, majoritarian articulation of the social democratic tradition . . . accompanied by a universalist commitment to democratic equality."

Schwartz's "presentist" approach has its interpretive drawbacks. One is anachronism. Thus Hegel's *Polizei* is said to prefigure "the role in advanced capitalist regimes of regulatory agencies and state macroeconomic and trade policy" and Marx is criticized for "never adequately confronting the implications of automation and cybernetics for the quality of work in an industrial or postindustrial society." Another is that the principals' theories are considered primarily as contributions to the debates among professors that prevail in the penumbra. Thus most of the Marx chapter concerns his views about morals, rights, and justice (about which he wrote almost nothing and always in passing) and Hegel is described as "the first great communitarian critic of liberal conceptions of morality." This sits oddly with the author's promise of "recurrent historical and sociological references" and preference for "the political sociology of everyday life" and his complaint that "one of the greatest weaknesses of contemporary political theory" is "its radical separation of normative argument from concrete inquiry about the specific political and socioeconomic institutional practices that would instantiate such norms."

Nonetheless, Schwartz's perspective and preoccupations do generate some interesting and sometimes provocative insights concerning his chosen authors. For one thing, he has a refreshing way of asking: what actually goes on in the institutions they envisage? He points to the weaknesses in the widespread conception of Rousseau as a proponent of direct democracy, observing that his assemblies are basically "ritual institutions that promote moral education and rejuvenation. They do not engage in political debate and decision making." Indeed, for Rousseau, "it is precisely the absence of conflict in the sovereign assembly which manifests the existence of civic well-being and a healthy general will." He shows how limited are the deliberations of Hegel's legislature, which is essentially "a transmission belt for information for the bureaucracy," arguing that Hegel "tried to transcend politics by curtailing the political influence of interests through the bureaucratic mediation of conflict by his universal class of civil servants." And he interprets Hannah Arendt as declaring "war on private and social interests," albeit in the name of politics, which, for her, is limited to "the grand politics of constitution making, war, the spontaneous creation of revolutionary councils, and collective disobedience to defend true constitutional principles"—the "high politics" of "glory and memorable speeches" about the final ends of the political community.

He also sees interesting connections between his central characters. He is right to say that Hegel, unlike Marx, "perceived the importance of particular identities and communal projects within civil society to the social development of freedom" and that Marx's universal class, unlike Hegel's, "aimed to transcend politics by coming to power and abolishing the very particularity that, in his view, gives rise to politics in the first place." He also rightly stresses the weakness of the case for seeing Marx as a committed postrevolutionary democrat and suggests that his equation of politics with class conflict and his assumption of homogeneous working-class interests prepared the ground for Engels's and Lenin's even more technocratic, scientistic conceptions of postrevolutionary society. And he argues that Arendt, unlike Marx and Lenin, worried about scientific management replacing politics, but in doing so drew an untenably sharp distinction between politics and economics and failed "to see that the ways we structure both production and social provision are inherently political issues," thus appearing to share

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"Engels's (and later Lenin's) faith that in a society of abundance scientific expertise can solve all social problems."

Schwartz has no time for such "radical visions of postscarcity"' and of the final overcoming of the division of labor or for what he calls "a universal conception of human identity and a monistic conception of the good," by which he appears to mean the very possibility of non-coerced convergence toward a single, overall vision of the good life. And this takes us to the heart of his argument: that what he calls the classical radical tradition aimed to "transcend the preconditions of politics—the plurality of social groups, particular communal identities, and divergent social interests." These are, he claims, what Rousseau sought to eradicate, Hegel to regulate through bureaucratic management, the Marxist tradition to overcome through revolutionary transformation, and Arendt to bypass in her "'interest-less' politics of virtue."

There is of course much force in this argument, as in its companion argument, also advanced here: that this shared longing for social unity and impulse to transcend politics has had historical consequences, in particular upon "twentieth-century radicalism's flirtation with, and often explicit defense of, antipluralist, authoritarian regimes." That flirtation and defense used to be of central concern to writers such as Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin, Raymond Aron, Jacob Talmon and Leszek Kolakowski, who saw themselves as defending liberal fundamentals against the tide, hoping to save their readers and susceptible students from dangerous errors. Though he nowhere refers to them (except briefly to Talmon), readers familiar with their writings will recognize in Schwartz's book their various targets and some of their arguments. He avoids some of their cruder interpretations (his Rousseau is much superior to Talmon's and his Hegel to Popper's). He is also more cautious that they in imputing a dangerous historical influence to the ideas he criticizes, remarking that Talmon for one "ascribes to the political theorist an inordinate ability to affect the course of history."

I wish he had gone further into this intriguing question. For instance, I maintain that Marxism always manifested a congenital blindness toward moral questions concerning individual rights because of its core commitment to the idea that the world could be rid of the conditions that made them necessary. The effects of this, both on true believers and on many others who ac-

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cepted this commitment, are worth investigation. Thus Lev Kopelev, recalling his part in the liquidation of the kulaks, could write of how, although he was appalled by what he saw, his beliefs could tame his doubts. Schwartz suggests that such beliefs express a "radical impulse" shared by the thinkers he discusses, but there is much more to say about just how they worked their effects and what effects they had.

Is that "radical impulse" still alive and are these effects still to be feared? Popper and his fellow liberals were, I have suggested, writing against the tide. But the tide has turned. The worldwide collapse of communism, the sense of ecological crisis, the ever-increasing dilemmas of the welfare state, the increasing pressures of multicultural cohabitation, and much else have made the permanence of scarcity, conflicting interests, and divergent collective identities self-evident to all. This applies no less to the contemporary political theorists with whom Schwartz takes issue in his polemical last chapter—communitarians, postmodernists, "post-Marxist or ex-socialist converts to 'discourse analysis,' " and adherents to the "politics of difference." Who among them would seriously disagree with his claim that "the true challenge for a just polity is to develop bonds of social solidarity which do not obliterate those very social differences that necessitate the construction of a limited but substantive common identity"?

Schwartz's project, he says, is to "liberalize" the radical tradition while affirming "the radical tradition's critique of the inequalities of power within the civil societies of liberal democracies." It is a vital project, with which *Dissent* readers will feel an immediate affinity. Like (virtually) all the contemporary thinkers scribbling within the circular room, they will take Schwartz's defense of the liberal antitotalitarian case for granted. The real challenge lies in pursuing the implications of his positive affirmation. In what direction does a "truly liberal democratic socialism" point today? I, for one, eagerly await the author's answer. □

Steven Hahn

BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES

BLACK LIBERATION: A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF BLACK IDEOLOGIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH AFRICA, by George M. Fredrickson. Oxford University Press, 1995. 390 pp., $30.

George Fredrickson is one of this country's most prolific and influential historians of race relations and racial thought. His earliest book in this area, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1971), was a pioneering study of the construction of racialist ideas, North and South, in the nineteenth-century United States. He followed with an equally timely but even more ambitious work, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (1981), an exploration of the deep histories of institutionalized segregation in both societies. *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* is in many ways a sequel to *White Supremacy*, though it can easily stand on its own.

Fredrickson is by no means the first scholar to glimpse the logic of comparing race relations in the United States (and especially the Southern United States) and South Africa. After all, the almost simultaneous emergence of draconian systems of white domination during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in societies

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that were otherwise marked by very great differences, and their endurance for most of the twentieth century, seemed to cry out for comparative analysis. But Fredrickson quickly established himself as one of the most learned historians of the subject, and in *White Supremacy* he produced not so much a "comparative study" as a dual or parallel history with comparative assessments. For Americanists (and Americans more generally) who knew relatively little about the history of South Africa, this approach proved to be extremely edifying, particularly as the struggle against apartheid increasingly took the international stage during the mid-1980s.

Although Fredrickson did not intend to write a sequel to *White Supremacy*, the dramatic and ultimately successful assaults on apartheid in the 1980s changed his mind. With unexpected speed the seemingly impossible had occurred, and it stirred Fredrickson's interest both in "the history of the black opposition" in South Africa and in how that opposition may have "compared with the African-American freedom struggles" that so powerfully shaped his own consciousness and that he "had long wanted to study and write about." The result is a book that shares much with his earlier work in its sensibility, its approach to writing history, and its general focus of investigation, but is distinctive in at least one significant respect: black people are not simply the objects of white intellectual and political activity, as they were in *Black Image in the White Mind* and *White Supremacy*; in *Black Liberation* they are the main actors.

From the outset, Fredrickson is quite clear as to what his book is and what it is not. It is by no means a "full comparative history of black resistance to white supremacy." It makes no effort to treat "slave resistance" or "the struggles of independent Africans against the original establishment of European imperial hegemony." Neither is it about the circulation of ideologies, the process of mobilization, or the "popular *mentalities*" to be found in either society. Rather, *Black Liberation* chiefly examines "the protest of black people within the structures of domination established by whites" and "presumes that blacks had some right or opportunity to make their grievances known." Which is to say that it concentrates on the social character, ideas, institutions, and activities of leadership elites roughly between the mid-nineteenth century and the 1980s.

Disclaimers notwithstanding, this is no small undertaking. *Black Liberation* not only covers a century and a half of American and South African history but also embraces a great range of actors, organizations, ideas, and movements. We move from the early struggles for political rights to the early emergence of Pan Africanism and "Ethiopianist" thought; from the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress [ANC]) to the explosion of Garveyism and the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU); from the appearance of the communist left to the advent of mass civil disobedience; from the rise of Gandhian nonviolent resistance to the birth of Black Power and Black Consciousness. Through the pages and chapters walk intellectuals and political activists who are widely familiar (Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, A.K. Soga, Mohandas Gandhi, Clements Kadalie, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, and Steve Biko), and those who are little known to nonspecialists (Alexander Crummel, Henry McNeal Turner, Harry Haywood, Pixley Seme, J.E.K. Aggrey, and Moses Kotane). What seeks to impose order on this panorama is a historical argument and a political belief: an argument about the "remarkable congruence" between the freedom struggles in the United States and South Africa, and a belief in the contemporary relevance of a multicultural nonracialism most recently embraced by the civil rights movement of the early 1960s and the ANC of the late 1980s.

"Congruence" is not what Fredrickson had expected to find. Ever attentive to the significance of historical contexts, he had already emphasized (in *White Supremacy*) the "structural and demographic differences" between the two societies, and readily acknowledged that he was drawing comparisons between the struggle of a racial minority for equal rights (in the United

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States) and that of a racial majority for its rightful share of power (in South Africa). Thus his surprise in discovering upon closer study a host of similarities: in the shared sense of minority status within white-dominated, multiracial societies; in the common Pan-African frame of reference; and in the almost identical social profiles of those "who normally articulated the ideologies and led the movements." Indeed, *Black Liberation* is organized so as to accentuate a series of episodic similarities over many decades. There is the nineteenth-century battle to gain and protect the franchise and the recourse among some to racial separatism, religious independentism, and what Fredrickson calls "Ethiopianism." There is the early twentieth-century protest of "talented tenths" against newly institutionalized systems of segregation followed by the emergence of "populist" Pan Africanisms during and immediately after World War One. There is the experience, from the 1920s to the 1940s, with the organizing drives of respective communist parties and then, beginning with the Second World War, the emergence of nonviolent resistance and black power. And throughout, there is the enduring ideological and political tension between racial universalism on the one hand and ethnic or racial nationalism on the other.

Such similarities do not, of course, mean similar outcomes, and Fredrickson shows that intellectual currents and political movements surfacing in both the United States and South Africa could (and usually did) play out very differently. If anything, the outcomes become studies in contrast. By the end of the nineteenth century, for example, the civil and political status of African-Americans was deteriorating rapidly while black and Colored South Africans (at least in the Cape colony) still had cause for some optimism. During the 1910s, African-Americans managed to limit the extent and impact of segregation in public life while black South Africans were fighting a losing and seemingly hopeless battle. In the 1920s, Garveyism became a powerful mass movement among urban blacks in the United States but had far less mass appeal in South Africa. Communist parties in both countries actively supported black struggles against racial oppression and provided rare sites of interracial mingling, but while the Communist party of South Africa became increasingly central to the anti-apartheid coalition, in the United States it always remained at the margins of civil rights mobilizations. And in the two decades after the Second World War, the United States and South Africa embarked upon radically different political courses. The dates 1948 and 1960 underline the contrast: in the United States they marked the election of Harry Truman and the Democrats with an explicit civil rights plank in the platform, and then the Greensboro lunch counter sit-in, which helped launch the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a wave of community-based protests that put Southern segregationists on the defensive; in South Africa they marked the triumph of the Afrikaner Nationalists and their system of apartheid, and then the bloody massacre at Sharpeville, which was followed by years of intensified repression that saw the ANC banned and its leadership imprisoned or driven into exile.

We may therefore wonder whether the "remarkable congruence" that Fredrickson claims to find is more apparent than real, and, in a larger sense, whether his "comparative history" is built on a series of rather thin reeds. Historical comparisons should not require the demonstration of overall similarities (the most pathbreaking contributions to the literature tend to emphasize dissimilarities), but they do raise an assortment of tricky conceptual and methodological issues that must be confronted. We need to be clear about what is being compared, about the objective of inquiry, and about whether the specific comparisons provide a format appropriate to the task. We also need to recognize that what may look like a comparative "history" (a comparison of what we believe to have happened) often turns out to be a comparative "historiography" (a comparison of how scholars have written about what they believe to have happened), in good measure because comparative histories are almost always dependent on secondary, as opposed to archival, sources (and this is certainly true of *Black Liberation*).

The most stimulating scholarly undertakings have been especially mindful of how they approach the subject matter and in doing so have

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broadened our frames of reference and deepened our understanding of the histories and historiographies within those frames. One thinks, in this connection, of Barrington Moore, Jr.'s classic *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, which challenged prevailing modernization theories and brought specialists on England, France, the United States, Germany, Russia, India, China, and Japan into new, albeit uneasy, dialogue. Or, more recently, of Peter Kolchin's *Unfree Labor*, which, in comparing American slavery and Russian serfdom, developed an intriguing historical analogy while placing the experience of and writing about American slavery in a new light. Or, perhaps most pertinently, of John Cell's *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, which analyzed the "origins of segregation" in South Africa and the American South and not only gave new meanings to the institutionalization of segregation but also offered an impressive critique of the relevant historical and social science literatures in both countries.

These and other scholars whose contributions have been provocative and enduring began with a central problem or question raised by debates in the national or international literatures: debates, say, about the process of slave emancipation in the United States or about the course of capitalist development in Western Europe. They chose their comparisons with that problem or question in mind and examined the assumptions on which the debates rested, in the end supporting, controverting, or (better yet) recasting the dominant views. Frank Tannenbaum's *Slave and Citizen*, one of the earliest modern historical comparisons (published in 1947), offers a particularly good example of this. A Latin Americanist by training, Tannenbaum wondered why some multiracial societies in the Western Hemisphere (such as Brazil) were characterized by relatively fluid and mild race relations while others (such as the United States) had rigid and oppressive regimes. The answer, he thought, might reside in the prior systems of enslavement. So he conducted a comparison of slave systems in Brazil, the United States, and the Caribbean, and, focusing on laws and institutions rather than practices, found considerable differences. In Catholic societies like Brazil, he insisted, church and court gave the slave a legal personality and the slave family recognition and protection, whereas in Protestant societies like the United States the church did not interfere on behalf of the slave and the law defined the slave as mere chattel.

Now, in raising the question that inspired his study, Tannenbaum accepted rather uncritically the Brazilian myth of racial democracy (the conventional historiographic and cultural wisdom at the time); but in so doing he contested the predominant scholarly representation of slavery in the United States (as relatively mild and paternalistic) and suggested a new way of thinking about the relationship between systems of African-American slavery and patterns of post-emancipation race relations. The result was a great surge of interest, research, and discussion in the area of comparative slavery and race relations—a whole field of study was born—much of which eventually cast Tannenbaum's own arguments into doubt.

Fredrickson is interested in deepening our understanding of struggles against racism, and the comparative nature of *Black Liberation* contributes toward that end in at least a couple of ways. For one thing, he shows that the ideological opposition between "color-blind universalism and racially defined nationalism" often identified by the historiographies in both countries is overdrawn, that black (and Colored) leaders virtually across the spectrum in the United States and South Africa attempted to fashion some synthesis rather than embrace one position to the exclusion of the other. Hence, we are left with fuller views of figures like Du Bois, Washington, King, Gandhi, Mandela, and Biko. Furthermore, *Black Liberation* reminds us of how large a political and intellectual field Pan-Africanism carved out during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—one that is certainly Atlantic in its dimensions and suggests, ironically, that a comparative history confined to only two countries may not be the best way of approaching freedom struggles in either of them. Indeed, according to Fredrickson's own account, African-Americans and black South Africans have had little *direct* influence on each other since at least the Second World War.

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But, in the end, one puts *Black Liberation* down without a clear sense of how different the histories or historiographies of the United States and South Africa now look, and with a nagging sense of dissatisfaction. Part of the problem is that there is an unresolved tension between what Fredrickson *would like to do* in this work and what he is *prepared to do*. He would like to enrich our understanding of black struggles against racial oppression and draw contemporary lessons from the stories of two significant examples. Yet, Fredrickson is only prepared to define the world of politics and ideology in such a way as to encompass the upper echelon of black leaders in both societies, almost all of whom were educated in the traditions of Euro-American culture and evangelical Christianity. It is not surprising, then, that he would find a "remarkable congruence," and this certainly enables the sort of historical comparison with which he is most comfortable. But we do not gain much of a grasp of what were effectively mass (and very diverse) political movements conducted by people largely excluded from the official arenas of politics, in which the strains of ethnic nationalism, racial separatism, and localistic loyalties were undoubtedly more powerful and in which the "congruences" were quite limited. This does not mean that a comparative analysis is unattainable; it means that such an analysis must be conceptualized and organized differently. As Fredrickson himself notes, when Marcus Garvey imagined a model for the liberation movement he hoped to build, he looked not to the United States or to Africa or to the West Indies, but to the republican struggle against British rule in Ireland.

And so, the lessons that Fredrickson draws—careful, thoughtful, and inspired as they are by a deep and abiding commitment to the construction of a multicultural and nonracial democracy—provoke some skepticism. Fifteen years ago, he concluded *White Supremacy* with lingering optimism about African-American prospects for achieving "equality of essential rights and free choice about their destiny" and with profound pessimism about South Africa's prospects for avoiding race war and the eventual victory of a punitive African nationalist regime. He even suggested that African-American progress might serve as a useful model for black South Africans. He concludes *Black Liberation* with a wholly different assessment. Mindful of the hopelessness and alienation to be found in much of black America as well as of the absence of a "broad-based anti-racist political movement in the United States," he is immensely impressed by the inclusive vision and the ideological and tactical flexibility of the ANC, and he believes that the ANC's experience might serve as a useful model for African-Americans (without mentioning the violent divisions that have recently beset black South Africa and threaten the vitals of the Mandela government). Lessons and prognostications, it appears, do not easily or clearly flow from comparative history. Such are the risks and pitfalls that accompany the tempting prospects. □

TO OUR READERS: THANKS!

We are happy to report that our biennial fund drive this past autumn brought in a little more than the $110,000 we had set as our goal, thereby ensuring the survival of the magazine for the next two years. To those who contributed, whether in large or small amounts, we extend our warmest thanks. To those who have not yet contributed, we remind you that it is not too late to lend a hand by sending your tax-deductible check to our sponsoring foundation, FSISI, in care of *Dissent*, 521 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1700, New York, N.Y. 10017.—Eds.

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Revived Progressivism

Editors:

I very much appreciated the symposium on Jeffrey C. Isaac's critique of a revived progressivism and his hymn to localist democracy ("The Poverty of Progressivism," Fall 1996). Still, I am concerned that the discussion surrounding the piece so quickly replicated what Amitai Etzioni calls the "malaise of either/or." No good purpose can be served by once again forcing people to choose sides between national reforms and local action, between electoral politics and community organization.

At the risk of replacing "either/or" with an equally trite "both/and," let me note that a two-track strategy is really all we have to work with. No one way is always or even ultimately preferable to another. Class does not always trump race or gender, and building houses with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity is no substitute for an effective program of public housing. Ending the war in Vietnam, as many have long acknowledged, required the tireless activity not only of people in the street but also of people in the halls of government. If we are going to have any hope of reviving a left politics, surely the slogan of "Think globally, act locally" (or is it the other way around?—no matter) must be a constant reminder that all efforts are valuable and perhaps even necessary.

In other words, local activists must pursue their work while simultaneously searching for common ground with others in the midst of other projects. The visionaries seeking to transform society through new reform programs or electoral vehicles must continue striving for utopia, while being called back to reality by the diversity of needs and experiences our large country contains. Can such a two-track strategy, with its concomitant division of activist labor, really succeed in changing American politics? Just ask Newt.

LEONARD WILLIAMS
North Manchester, Ind. □

Erratum

We apologize to Joshua Rubenstein, author of *Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg*, for misspelling his name in our review in the Winter 1997 issue—EDS.

Assigning Priorities to *Dissent* Articles

Editors:

Dissent is always interesting, but I wonder about the balance of articles in each issue. How do you decide about the relative weight assigned, say, to culture and politics (culture has been coming back strong in recent *Dissent*s), or to politics and political economy (you are not as strong on economics as you used to be), or to politics-at-home and abroad (I notice a greater emphasis on "home" since the electoral disaster of '94). The standard Old Left position on these three choices would be politics, political economy, and "abroad." The New Left position: culture, politics, and "home." Where exactly do you stand?

WALTER MICHAELS
Sioux City, Iowa

The Editors Reply:

For the beginning of a response to the above questions, see this issue's Editor's Page.—EDS. □

To Letter Writers

- *We welcome succinct letters from our readers. But because we have a long "lead time" for each issue, you have to send us your letter within three weeks after getting an issue of* Dissent *in order to get it into the next issue. So if you want to write about something that you like, or dislike, in or about* Dissent, *please do it quickly.*

- *Letters must be kept to about 500 words, typed, double-spaced, and carry the full address and name of the sender. We reserve the right to edit letters down to fit our space and to choose which shall be printed. We are unable to acknowledge letters. Letters will not be returned to senders unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.*

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The Last Page

A stranger smiled at me on Broadway the other day and I smiled back at him. This shouldn't be unusual, but in New York City it is. What made me reflect on this brief encounter was the ease I now feel on the streets. This ease has nothing to do with not fearing crime. I'm talking about broad daylight, crowded-street ease, being able to walk without having any male make comments about me or my body. For years I gritted my teeth walking past construction sites or candy stores. I rehearsed in my mind all the wonderful put-downs I read in *Ms.* and would never be brave enough to try.

I didn't always feel that way. When I was twelve years old and got my first wolf whistle I was thrilled. My mother was less excited and told me that I'd be hearing some form of this for a long time, until I got too old. I wasn't sure how ancient you had to be for guys to ignore you, but probably pretty old, like her, say, forty-five.

The thrill wore off fast. In my braless twenties I toughed it out, refusing to modify dress for either street or office. In my thirties I thought a wedding ring would be some protection. That hope died on my honeymoon, when for a half hour in Paris I strayed from my husband to visit a museum and spent the time fending off an obnoxious twenty-something man.

At last, with pregnancy, I thought I'd found the perfect defense. Wrong. Some men, it turns out, are excited by the sight of a pregnant body. No, the true turnoff, as it happens, is a baby or small child. The minute the child was against my stomach instead of inside, the male response to me as a desirable female ceased. Now men who might have seemed threatening or lascivious before offered me seats on the bus and shared comments about their own children.

And while I was pushing a stroller and enjoying this new life on the streets, something else happened. My mother's prediction came true. I reached that age. I'm not sure exactly when it happened. I noticed it first on another trip to Paris. Alone for the first time in ten years, I ventured along boulevards and in museums with my nerves taut. There was no need. I was invisible.

I came home excited by the thought, eager to try new adventures while I was still young enough to enjoy them but too old to be hassled. "It's not true," said my loyal husband. "You're very attractive. They didn't notice you because it was raining so much and you were all bundled up." (Well, that's one reason why I married him, isn't it?)

Was there a part of me that regretted this loss? No, the regret was for those years when rage and fear limited my sights, when my "nice girl" training kept me from confronting harassers—and when two attempted rapes kept me more cloistered than I wished. Would I ever have been able to see men on the streets as other than menaces? Would I have traveled more widely, visited more places even here in the city if I hadn't been burdened with unpleasant memories from the Luxembourg Gardens to Chapultepec Park? I don't know.

My oldest daughter is twelve now. She is tall and buxom, both of which she sees as liabilities. Last spring, on a warm night in the Village, she wanted to roll up her tee shirt to show off some fake tattoos on her stomach. "Not here," I cautioned, although my rational mind said there was no better place. And the tension that I hadn't felt for years rose in my chest. I wanted to hold her tight and say, "You're still a child. You don't know what it's like to be seen as a woman!" Instead, we walked in silence for a couple of blocks. "Go ahead," I urged her. "Let me knot your shirt up."

"No, it's OK," she said. And we continued toward the subway.

MAXINE PHILLIPS

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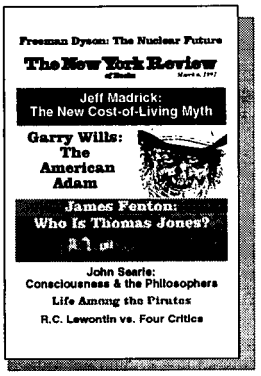

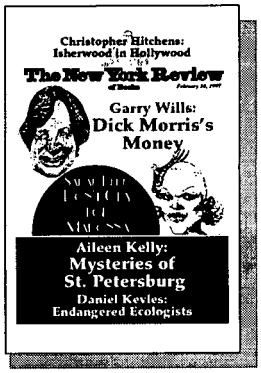

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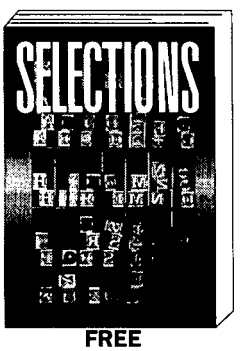

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